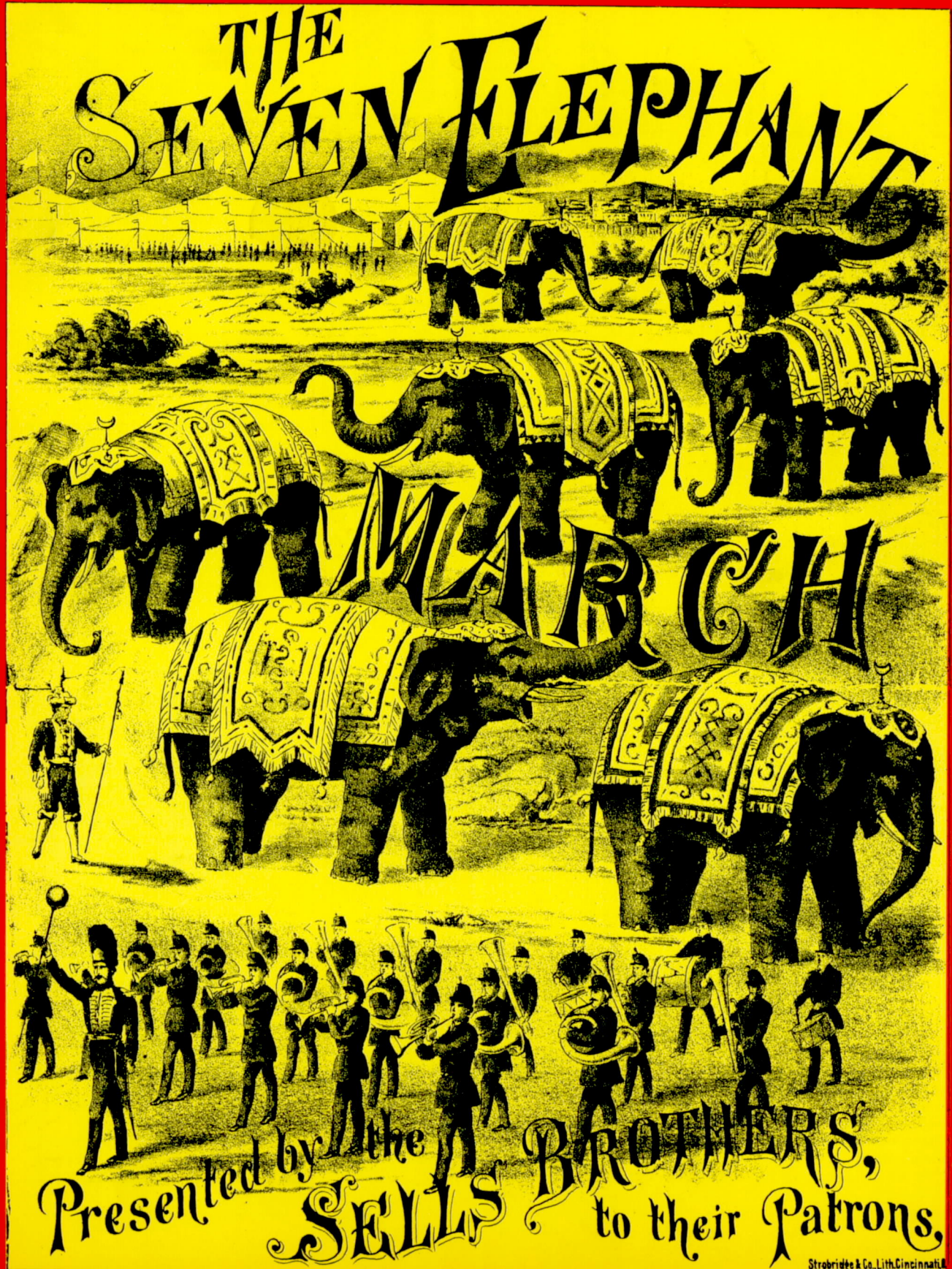


BANDWAGON

MAY-JUNE 1973





THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

For our cover design this issue we have reached way back in circus history, selecting a very rare piece of circus art.

In 1878 the Sells Bros. Circus was titled The Great European Seven Elephant Menagerie and Circus. The show's bandleader Prof. L. Heck composed a special musical composition entitled the "Seven Elephant March." The march was published by the show in the form of sheet music and carried this design by the Stobridge Litho Co. on the front. It is printed in black with no color.

The music is inside and on the back a large number of newspaper afternotices are reprinted, indicating that the music may have been distributed free ahead of the shows arrival.

A few of the reprinted notices follow:

We can conscientiously say that Sells Bros. Great 7 Elephant Railroad is the best traveling the world. — Bay City (Mich.) Daily Tribune. The menagerie contains a long list of rare animals, representing almost every country upon the face of the globe. — Dayton (O.) Daily Democrat. The ring performance is excellent, and in our humble opinion it excels in variety and genuine merit any show that P. T. Barnum ever started. — Midland City (Mich.) Courier. The Sells Bros. Circus and Menagerie has all it advertises. — Bloomington (Ind.) Progress. The street parade was all that was claimed for it in the magnificent posters and eloquent advertisements, which is no mean compliment. East Saginaw (Mich.) Daily Courier.

The original piece is from the Pfening Collection.

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1973 CHS CONVENTION

August 3 & 4

The 1973 CHS annual meeting and presentation of historic circus papers will be held on August 3 and 4, 1973, in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The Library and Research building of the Circus World Museum will be the location for two days of circus history and fellowship.

If you wish to present a paper in person, or have a paper read you may contact President Chang Reynolds or Vice President Stuart Thayer.

Last year's meeting was a great success, join us this year for a fine program.

ADVISE ADDRESS CHANGES IN ADVANCE

Please send your change of address to the Editor in Columbus prior to moving.

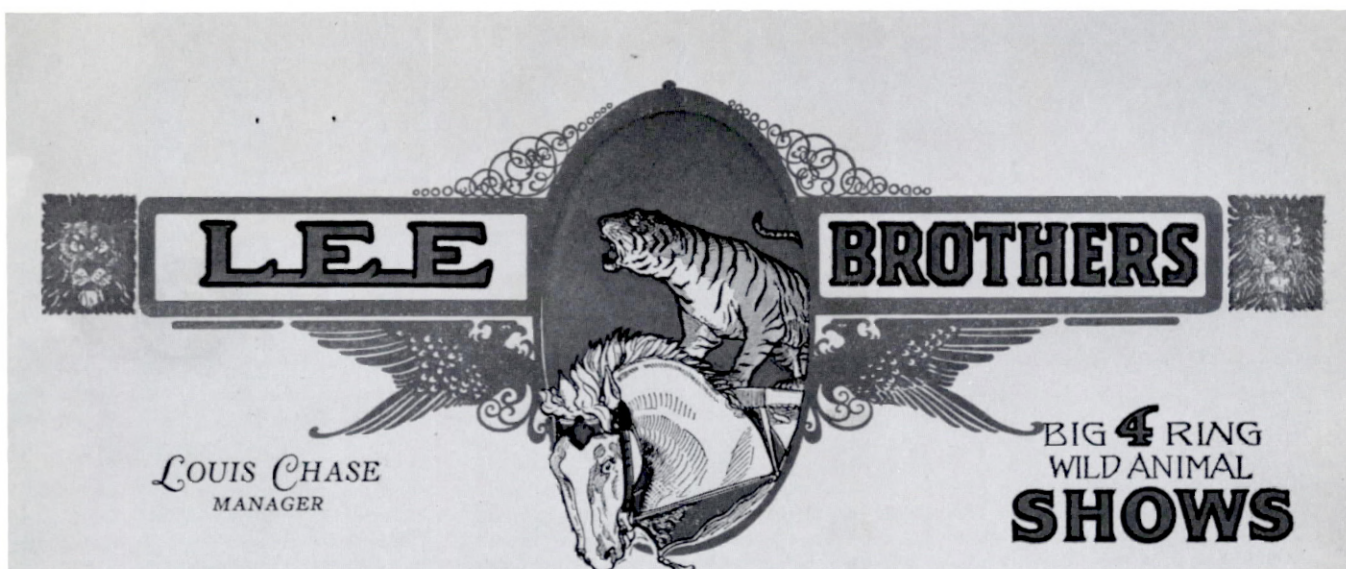
The post office will not forward the Bandwagon, but does send the new address back to us, without the magazine, with 10¢ postage due.

A second copy of the issue will not be sent free of charge, one must be purchased at the cost of \$1.30. Let us hear from you in advance.

CIRCUSIANA MART IS BACK

A new list is now available covering programs, route books and hundreds of back issues of WHITE TOPS. Send 10¢ or self-addressed stamped envelope.

Circusiana Mart, 2515 Dorset Rd.
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LEE BROS. BIG FOUR RING WILD ANIMAL SHOW

By JOSEPH T. BRADBURY

Lee Bros. Big Four Ring Wild Animal Show was the title used by George W. Christy on his "No. 2" circus for the seasons of 1925 and 1926. Although the 15 car Lee show would rank in the bottom third of the list of railroad circuses on the road those seasons in physical size and importance, there were a number of people with it who later would become quite prominent in the circus and other fields, such names as Harry James, Terrell Jacobs, Allen King, Eugene "Arky" Scott and Frank Orman. With it also were C. A. "Red" Sonnenberg and Theo Forstall, both well known to current circus buffs.

The chain of events involving a variety of circus titles and personalities which led to Lee Bros. in 1925 goes back to the two car Backman-Tinsch of 1920. Upon conclusion of the season the show's owners, John T. Backman and Al Tinsch formed a partnership with W. F. "Doc" Palmer and framed a ten car (flat car type) show which went on the road in 1921 using the title of Palmer Bros. Circus. Equipment for this show came in part from the Hall Farm and included wagons which had been on the 1920 Yankee Robinson and Howes Great London Show.

During the winter of 1921-22 Palmer Bros. was purchased by Mike E. Golden, Milt Runkle, and Charles J. Adams. It was enlarged to 15 cars and retitled Howes Great London Show for the 1922 season. In 1923 with Runkle out of the picture and Mike Golden firmly in the driver's seat the title was changed to Golden Bros. Circus. Adams was out in 1924 and the show continued under the Golden title.

On June 18, 1924 the show was sold to John Pluto for \$18,500.00 but he operated it only a few months before selling to George

This letterhead design used by Golden Bros. in 1924 was reworked for the Lee Bros. title in 1925. The title is in gold with a blue outline. The background of the tiger and horse is also in gold. The scroll and boxes around the title is orange in one version and yellow in another. This was the first design used by the Lee show. Pfening Collection.

W. Christy at Mooresville, N. C. on Sept. 8. Tradition has it that Christy peeled off 20 one grand bills on the lot to pay Pluto. Immediately after taking possession Christy

Lee Bros. band directed by Everett James, season of 1925. In back is one of the show's bandwagons with a painting of a lion in a jungle scene on the side. Pfening Collection.



made some quick improvements, rerouted it, and did not close for the season until Dec. 22 at Beaumont, Texas. It is said that the show had paid for itself during the few months Christy had it. For further information on the Golden Bros. Circus the reader is invited to consult the history of that show by the author which appeared in the Jan.-Feb. 1957 White Tops.

George W. Christy had a spectacular rise in outdoor showbusiness. Starting with a one car show about 1910 he had done well and at the end of the 1921 season he converted his 3 car circus into a 10 car, flat car type, show which went out in 1922. In 1924 this show was up to 20 cars and bore the title of Christy Bros. Wild Animal Show. For several years Christy had wintered at the fairgrounds in Beaumont, Texas, but since he would need additional quarters space to



LEE BROS.

BIG 4 RING

WILD ANIMAL SHOWS

house his newly acquired Golden Bros. show he purchased a large building on Crockett Street in Beaumont which was adjacent to the Gulf Coast Railroad tracks. This building was only a ten minute walk from the fairgrounds.

Winterquarter work for both the Christy and Golden shows was divided between the Crockett Street building and the fairgrounds. Both trains were parked on the sidings at Crockett temporarily and then were sent to the Pennsylvania Car Shops in the city to be repaired and readied for the next season. The blacksmith, carpenter, and paint shops were located at Crockett Street while all animals, except baggage stock, were housed at the fairgrounds. Baggage stock were pastured on nearby farms. All training of acts and rehearsals took place at the fairgrounds. About mid-January 1925 Christy opened a zoo located in the agricultural building at the fairgrounds to the public each Sunday from 10 to 5. As wagons were completed thru the carpenter, blacksmith, and paint shops they were moved over to one of the large fairgrounds stock buildings for storage. This arrangement of the dual sites in Beaumont seem to work fine and there was adequate space to carry on all activities.

In very early January Christy announced his plans for the coming season. He said that Christy Bros. would continue on 20 cars and that the title of Lee Bros. would be used on the former Golden show and that the Golden title would be used on a three car show he would put on the road in 1925. A few weeks later Christy said he would drop the Golden title altogether and that title for the 3 car show would be Texas Ranch Wild West. All three of these shows did take to the road in 1925, a total of 38 cars being used which was an all time high for Christy.

One of the first contract signings for the coming season was that of the James family which had been with Christy for six seasons. Everett James signed as bandleader for Lee Bros. while his talented wife, Mabel, would be prima dona in the spec and do a number of acts in the performance. Their young son, Harry, about 10 at the time, would be in the spec, do clowning, contortion, and even help

The second style letterhead used by Lee was this one made for George Christy by the Erie Litho Co. The title is in red outlined in black with a yellow background and natural coloring of the animals in the circle heads. This cut was made from an original engravers color proof from the Erie files. Pfening Collection.

out in the band with his drums. This is the same Harry James who later became a popular trumpet player and orchestra leader. Rodney Harris was engaged as bandleader for Christy Bros. in 1925.

Writing in the Jan. 24, 1925 *Billboard*, Fletcher Smith, a very colorful character who played the Christy Bros. steam calliope for a number of seasons and served as the show's *Billboard* reporter, advised that Hank Ellis had built in quarters ten new wagons

Terrell Jacobs holding lion cub on lot of Lee Bros., season of 1925. Pfening Collection.



and cages, including a new calliope which was termed a beauty and made from plans drawn by Mr. Christy himself. Milt Taylor was engaged in breaking small domestic animals for Lee Bros. and a shipment of new wardrobe and trappings had been received from New York and would be divided between Christy and Lee.

It was Christy's custom for his shop forces to build most of his baggage and cage wagons and the previous year at the quarters Tom Tucker had built the familiar 12 ft. dens which would later become quite well known to circus fans in the Cole Bros. parades of the mid and late 30's. The baggage wagons turned out at the Christy Beaumont shops had a distinctive look about them, especially the wheels which were somewhat different from the familiar St. Mary's wheels most other shows had. An expert model builder or wagon historian can spot a Christy built wagon at a glance.

Good progress was made in the shops and by early February it was announced that the first parade wagons had been finished and moved to the fairgrounds for storage.

Evidently it had been planned for John Guilfoyle to work an animal act in the Lee Bros. performance but at quarters he was injured by a Russian brown bear and sent to the hospital and although he was out by late February he was still unable to do any work and did not appear in the Lee program during the season.

The Feb. 21 *Billboard* said that both the Christy and Lee advance cars had been newly painted and decorated by Artist Tood and all of the rail cars for both shows were now back from the Pennsylvania car shops and ready to roll. The last of the wagons had gone thru the blacksmith and carpenter shops and were now at the painters. Kid Cottman, who had been the steam calliope player with Golden Bros., was scheduled to go with Lee and was busy rewiring and retuning the two steam and two air calliopes at the quarters.

Changes in the physical equipment were few and basically the Lee Bros. show in 1925 was the same size and complexion as Golden. It travelled on 15 cars; one advance, 3 stocks, 7 flats, and 4 sleepers. Red Sonnenberg, who was on the show in 1926,

recalls that the train was painted orange and in particular the flats were a kind of "brownish orange". They were not lettered with the title and had only the initials L.B.S. In fact, Sonnenberg doesn't believe any of the rail cars were fully lettered with the title. The flats were the typical 60 ft. wooden cars which were still in use on many shows as late as 1925, including John Robinson and Ringling-Barnum. A number of shows were now equipped with the new 70 ft. all steel flats being turned out by Mt. Vernon and Keith car manufacturing companies. Lee's stocks were 70 ft. wooden jobs and the sleepers, although fairly old, were of vestibule type. All cars had underneath reinforcing rods which were typical of all wooden rail equipment in those days.

There were approximately 30 pieces of rolling stock which loaded on the flats. Baggage wagons were painted red and the approximately 10 cages a variety of colors. Most of the cages were working dens as the show presented trained lions, bears, pumas, and leopards in the performance. Cages were all rather plain and many of them had been built by show forces over the past few seasons.

Two elephants were carried, Rubber and Babe. Rubber was from the 1920 Yankee Robinson herd. There is no detailed menagerie list available for Lee Bros. but it is assumed there was little difference from the Golden 1924 "for sale" list which showed 2 elephants, 3 camels, 13 ponies, 2 mules, 7 male lions, 4 female lions, 7 bears, 2 leopards, 2 pumas. Likewise the Lee show probably carried the 41 head of baggage stock, 15 menage horses etc. shown on the Golden list, but Christy added additional saddle horses to only 2 shown by Golden.

It seems no truck or tractor suitable for pulling wagons to and from the lot was carried by Lee Bros. until according to the Billboard one was added in mid-season 1926. A passenger type automobile can be spotted by close observation of the loaded flats photo pictured here.

The Lee Bros. big top was about a 110 ft. round with three 40 ft. middles which according to Sonnenberg would seat about 2000. It had star backs on both short and long sides and blues on the ovals. Show carried a menagerie and sideshow top which should have been about a 70 ft. round with three 30's and 60 ft. with two 30's respectively.

A daily street parade was presented which was comparable to a show of its size. Golden Bros. had two large tableau wagons which are known to have been used by Lee. One was a large box type wagon which had a painting on the sides. It is pictured in the background of the photo of the band and appears to have a painting of a lion in a jungle scene. The other tab had three diamond shaped mirrors on the sides. A third Golden tab had come from the 1920 Yankee Robinson show and had three mirrors and carvings on its side. It had originated on Barnum & Bailey. In all probability this tab was carried by Lee Bros. but no photos have been located of it later than Golden

"MOST ASTOUNDING EXHIBITION EVER CONCEIVED"

LEE BROS

4-RING TRAINED WILD ANIMAL SHOWS

ONLY SHOW OF ITS KIND ON EARTH!

WONDERFUL, REAL TRAINED WILD ANIMAL SHOW



SENSATIONAL TRAINED WILD ANIMAL FEATURES

Foremost Men Taming Lions, Tigers, Leopards, Pumas and Other Beasts of the Jungle are Subjugated by their Natural Tendency to perform most Remarkable Feats that are Amazing. Tigers Ride Elephants - Lions Kick Horses - The Most Exciting Exhibition Ever Shown



A New Departure in the Show World - And a Show that is absolutely different from any other Exhibition that may have visited your city in the past.

Acres of Canvas - All Tents are Water-Proof.

Traveling on LEE BROS. own Special Train of 25 Cars.



LEE BROS. Present the most complete Wild Animal exhibition ever conceived. One that is educational, inspiring and pleasing.

HUGE STEEL ARENAS FILLED WITH PERFORMING WILD BEASTS

- MORE TRAINED WILD ANIMALS THAN ANY OTHER SHOW THAT HAS VISITED YOUR CITY -

The herald used by the Lee show is typical of the mid 1920s, using stock cuts from the printer. This one was used in 1925. Pfening Collection.

in 1924. The Golden Bros. ticket wagon which while on that show was painted rather plainly appears to have been decked up quite nicely in fancy scroll painting while on Lee Bros. and could have been used for parade purposes.

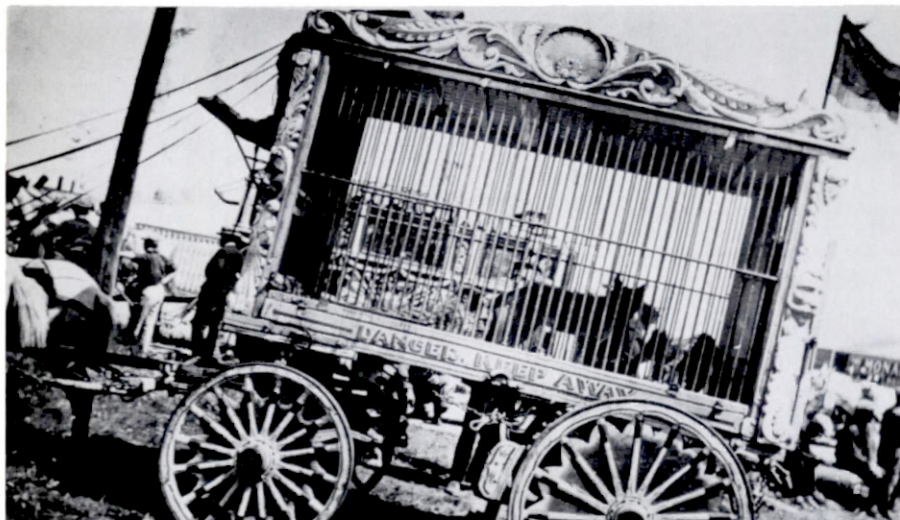
Since the show really didn't have a top notch parade wagon with it, Christy, added the famous Old Barnum & Bailey Orchestmelchoir wagon. He had used this wagon on Christy Bros. since 1922 and it was a beautifully carved wagon and a top parade flash. This wagon had a great history and the reader is invited to read Fred D. Pfening III's article on it which appeared in the Nov.-Dec. 1972, Bandwagon.

The lack of photographic coverage prevents us from taking a good look at the Lee Bros. parade composition but it appears it

at least had four major band or tableau wagons, probably carrying the big show band split into two sections, the clown, and sideshow bands. There was a steam calliope which was housed in a new wagon built at quarters. The former Golden steam calliope had come from the 1920 Howes Great London Show and was perhaps the first steamer ever owned by Mugivan and Bowers, going back at least to the 1907 Great Van Amburgh Show. Evidently the wagon was well worn so it was replaced by the new one built during the winter of 1924-25 at Beaumont. Although no photos have turned up showing it on Lee Bros. the wagon is quite familiar from photos taken while it was on the short lived 1936 Ken Mayard Wild West Show. It is pictured on page 21 of the Nov.-Dec. 1969 Bandwagon. There is some question if Lee Bros. had an air calliope mounted in a wagon for parade purposes in 1925. For sure it did in 1926 and a Billboard account of it being built will be related later. There is a possibility an air cally instrument was carried in 1925 and used only with the band during the performance.

Full title used by Lee both seasons was Lee Bros. Big Four Ring Wild Animal Show. The letterhead and newspaper ads carry "show" as singular while photos of the billing has it "shows". It was Christy's custom as well as many others to use the word show in contrast to circus when in reality there would be little or no noticeable difference in the performance. Outfits using the word "shows" however did seem to lean more to trained animal acts rather than acrobatis, riding, and aerial acts. There was a good reason for using the word shows instead of circus. Licenses in most places, but especially in the South, were on a graduated scale with one fee for a dramatic show, animal show, dog and pony, or circus. Inevitably the higher fee was for a circus. If an outfit used the word show in its title rather than circus, although in reality it would be classed as a true circus, it could often get a cheaper license, or "reader" as they used to call it in lot language. Fletcher Smith once said that while on Christy Bros. in the south, at times they would actually cut out certain circus type acts from the performance so as to avoid any suspicion on part of the authorities. I recently asked Theo Forstall for his observations in this matter and he replied as follows.

"Regarding what Fletcher Smith said about the Christy show having at times to cut out circus type acts to keep the local state license low in Georgia, you can well believe him as it happened in the old days. With the Gentry-Patterson show I recall in Tennessee in 1924 we ran into such a deal. To get a "show" license for \$50.00 a day instead of paying two hundred for a "circus" license, we arranged a deal whereby we cut out the riding act in the center ring (it was the Hollis troupe) as the collector said that was certainly a circus act, so cutting that out he would go for the cheaper license, and I am quite sure that Jess Adkins who



did the fixing on it duked him a few bucks for himself also. (Adkins was not the fixer, he was manager, but the fixer we had, old George Ross from Vanceboro, Me. could not tak to those "down yonder" officials — he was scared of them) I recall other deals of the same kind with fixers like Herb DuVal and Gordon Calvit. Once in Mississippi on Lee Bros. in 1925 Calvit fixed the locals for a low rate the whole week, only to have some guys from Jackson come down on him the last day in the state and shake us for over two grand that they claimed we had underpaid, plus penalties for doing so. Calvit was so mad he cried tears. A lot of times the fixer used to get by with a "dog and pony show" reader also and not just in the South either, and even with a "dramatic" show reader which was still cheaper but the guy collecting had his hand out as well you can bet."

The 1925 Lee Bros. staff was as follows: Louis Chase, general manager; Gordon C. Calvit, legal adjuster; Mack Carter, auditor; Everette James, musical director; Bert Wallace, equestrian director; Harry O. Morris, sideshow manager; Sam M. Dawson, press agent; Jack Riddle, big show announcer; Allen King, principal animal trainer; Slim Walker, elephants; L. L. Buckner, supt. of canvas, assisted by Whitey Donahue; Frank Koen, chief electrician; Joe Fish, trainmaster; Chauncey Jacobs, boss hostler; Joe Kelly, ring stock; Muldoon Hartman, chief steward; Johnny Grant, stake and chain; Bill O'Day, sideshow canvas; Mrs. Frank Koen, wardrobe mistress.

General agent, Bert Rutherford, who routed the Christy Bros. show, also handled Lee Bros. and as Red Sonnenberg pointed out, Lee Bros. was booked more or less by remote control by Meyer Schlaum, contracting agent, acting on instructions from Rutherford. Both Christy and Rutherford would visit Lee Bros. at times but infrequently and Sonnenberg recalls that in 1926 both of them came but a single time. Manager Louis Chase handled the show with a minimum of supervision from Christy.

Photos indicate Lee Bros. put up some

Cage wagon on Lee Bros. lot, season of 1926. The Orchest-melchoir tableau wagon can be seen in background. This cage was later on the Frank West Railroad Carnival in the 1930s. Author's Collection.

large daubs of colorful billing paper. Some sheets had in the top corner busts of the "Lee brothers". Just why Christy chose this particular title for his No. 2 show is not known to the author. Charles Lee had been a showman in the late 1900's and according to the Sturtevant lists there was a Lee Bros. Circus on the road in the period 1903-05 and no doubt other varieties of Lee titled outfit in the past. It is doubtful any of this past Lee history had anything to do with Christy's choosing of the title. It was short, easy to remember.

Attractions in the 1925 sideshow included Cleo Gill, Texas giant girl; Dixieland Jubilee Minstrels (company of 12); Great Laurie, sword swallower; Madame Marcelene, mental marvel; William Creiger, punch and judy; Lady Lenoir, snakes; Stanislaus Troupe of Russian dancers, knife throwers, and gun spinners; Valde La Marr, Parisian sword-walking novelty; O'Days, glass blowers; Mac Gill and the Scotch bagpipers; Mlle Rosetta and Billy Dick, Hawaiian dancers; Signor Arco, fire eater; and Mlle Juno, juggler. Jack Besser was manager of the refreshment stands (Jake latter had the big stand in the Ringling-Barnum menagerie for about 25 years until the under canvas show folded in Pittsburg, July 16, 1956). A number of "lucky boys" operated a shell game, three card monte, and other wares which were typical of non-Sunday school shows in those days. Red Sonnenberg will later explain the situation as existed when he was on the show in 1926.

A photo in the Aug. 22, 1925 Billboard (which regrettably is not of sufficient quality to reproduce) pictures the Lee Bros. sideshow as having a large entrance banner over the ball platform and 8 other banners all showing fine art work.

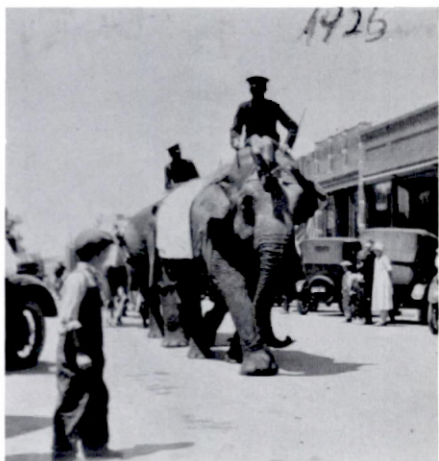
By mid-March George W. Christy had his No. 2 show all decked out and ready to

roll. He had a capable manager in Louis Chase, an experienced staff, a good performance featuring mainly animal acts with a colorful opening spectacle, (a trademark with all Christy shows) and had high hopes of continued success. Christy was still a young man, in his 30's, and had often been referred to as the "Young Barnum". It was now in the mid 1920's which history would later record as pretty good circus days, businesswise as well. In 1925 there would be considerable adverse weather conditions, including a major drought over widespread areas of the country, but likewise some rainy spots which many shows found themselves in. As usual some shows would falter along the way but generally most would have a pretty good season. Competition was heavy, almost everywhere, and fierce in spots. It took all of the skill and experience of an owner and his general agent to put a show into the right spot at the right time in order to snare his share of the loot. In addition to Lee Bros. other railroad shows (flat car type) on the road in 1925 were Ringling-Barnum, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sparks, Gentry-Patterson, Christy Bros., 101 Ranch Wild West, Walter L. Main, Robbins Bros., Frank J. Taylor, and Gollmar Bros., which first operated as a tunnel car show but during the season was converted to a flat car show. In addition to this impressive list there was Elmer H. Jones's two car show, Cooper Bros., plus fully 15 overland shows most of them now travelling with a combination of horse drawn wagons and motor trucks. All of the railers paraded with exception of Ringling-Barnum and Al G. Barnes. (Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and John Robinson went out intending not to parade but after about a month restored the daily march)

Lee Bros. opened the 1925 season March 14 at Port Arthur, Texas. The April 4, 1925 Billboard reviewed the show's performance as follows:

"COMPLETE PROGRAM OF LEE BROS. ANIMAL SHOW: The Lee Bros. Wild Animal Show which opened at Port

Lee Bros. elephants in parade, season of 1925. Pfening Collection.



Arthur, Tex., March 14, has been enjoying good weather and business. The show is under the management of Louis Chase and Bert P. Wallace is equestrian director.

"The program opens with a spectacle entitled, "Cinderella in Jungleland", Master Harry James taking the role of the child. Others in the spec are Rita Bell, Betty Jacobs, Flo Malberry, Dolly Ford, May Coppinger, Florence Riddle, Ethel Clay, Cleo Wallace, and Vonnie Orman as Cinderella. Charles Robinson as Prince Charming, Madame James, prima donna, and Billy Dick, Oriental dancer. The splendid band of 26 pieces (actually about 19) directed by Mr. James is scoring. Special music was arranged by him in conjunction with Mr. Wallace and Milt Taylor. Allen King is principal animal trainer; Taylor, producing clown, and Lee Ford, chief of cowboys.

"The big show program includes ponies presented by Capt. Jacobs and Joe Domar; Milt Taylor and his basket horse; hind-foot ponies, clown number, Jim DeColo, Bruce LaFarra, Chas Robinson, Joe Walker, Fred Manske, Harry James, Jack Riddle and Milt Taylor; riding dog and monkey worked by Cleo Wallace; black bears, trainer, June Johnson; riding dog and monkey, Rita Bell; perch by Misses James and Riddle; swinging ladders, Misses Wallace, Mayberry, Ford, Orman, Jacobs, and Myers; bucking mules, worked by the clowns; dancing girl in lion's den, Alma Taylor; six female lions, worked by Alma Taylor; dancing clowns and their dogs, Chas Robinson and his dancing dummy; cross-over dog, May Coppinger; riding hybrid, Betty Jacobs trainer; four riding goats, Vonnie Orman; clowns in their cutups; high-diving dogs and monkeys, worked by the joeys; iron-jaw numbers, Misses James and Riddle; Harry James, contortionist; Domar Family of acrobats; dog act, Miss Wallace; Milt Taylor and his goats; dogs, Miss Mayberry; clown walk around; camels, Joe Domar; elephants, Miss Johnson; bird song, Blue Bird Land, Madame James and 30 pigeons; posing horses, Misses Wallace, Bell, Ford, Sadie Kohn, Coppinger, Mayberry, Johnson, Orman, and Jacobs. Milt Taylor and Bruce LaFarra and their fire-wagon gag; elephant and pony, Miss Bell; elephant and dog, Miss Myers; dancing elephant, Sadie Kohn; clowns, pigeon act, Miss Mayberry; leopards and pumas by Alma Taylor; 14 full grown African male and female lions, Allen King; 16 high-school and menage horses, worked by Misses Wallace, Bell, Riddle, Taylor, Orman, James, Myers, Coppinger, Betty and Dewey Coppinger, Joe Dorman, Capt. Jacobs, and Lee Ford. (Rabbit in an old-fashioned one-step is featured and the animals mount is Miss Taylor; King Billy, ridden by Cleo Wallace, in an old fashioned chicken reel; Button Boy, ridden by Betty Jacobs, in a hesitation waltz); clowns in crazy walkaround; English fox hunt, the high jumps being done by Dan Lad, ridden by Miss Wallace; Sultan Boy, ridden by Miss Jacobs; Mighty Girl by Miss Riddle; Button Boy by Miss



Lee Bros. train in Canada, season of 1926. This photo shows from left to right a small portion of the coaches, the three stock cars, and practically all of the seven flats. Red Sonnenberg Collection.

Koppinger; broad-jumping horses, Star Boy ridden by Alma Taylor, Squirrel by Miss Myers; Rabbit by Rita Bell. The performance is concluded by Bruce LaFarra, Charles Robinson, and Milt Taylor with their burro race over the hurdles."

A traditional wild west aftershow was presented. It appears the steel arena remained in place throughout the performance. The spec following the Christy tradition was colorful and featured a lot of singing and dancing.

A week later the Billboard reported the program was running smoothly and business in Texas had been good. The train was loading promptly and runs were made in good time. It mentioned that band director James had eliminated most of the jazz numbers in the program this season and had replaced them with overtures and aires from standard composers. His son, Harry, was also playing drums in the band when not performing elsewhere in the show.

Early season routing took the show across Texas into the western portion of the state. Business at many spots was only fair due to a drought which had set in and would plague many shows during the 1925 season. At Post, Texas on April 2 a terrific sandstorm came up forcing the show to lower the peak of the big top but fortunately it lasted only a few minutes. Weather at many spots was windy but there was no rain. A goodly number of rather small places for a 15 car show were played and a writer from the show quipped to the Billboard that Christy Bros. was playing the big cities while Lee Bros. was in the sticks playing on the country.

After a little over a month in Texas the show went into Oklahoma April 17 at Elk City where it found business better. Three straw houses were reported while in the state. Charles Fulton, horse trainer, joined

at Hollis on April 22 and became assistant to Bert Wallace. Weather continued pretty good and after 8 weeks on the road with the show now in Colorado there had been only one day of rain. Also fortunately there had been no accidents.

Very little news about the show appeared in the Billboard other than apparently it was moving along okay making a swing through Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, and then into Minnesota. It spent several weeks going back and forth in the general area of the Minnesota and South Dakota border. The clowns organized a baseball team and played many local clubs on Sundays.

The July 11 Billboard did have a note about the show and said good business came at Clark and Brookings, South Dakota and in Minnesota at Tracy, Redwood Falls, and New Ulm. The take was especially good at the matinees. While in the area Manager Chase purchased ten additional head of baggage stock which now gave the show four teams of 8 horses each to go on the four tableau wagons giving the parade the "big show" look.

Lee then headed southward and entered Nebraska July 8 at Hartington. The Aug. 1 Billboard mentioned that Theo Forstall of the Gentry-Patterson Circus visited at Albion, Neb. (He would later join Lee Bros. after Gentry-Patterson closed). Two thoroughbred horses from Kentucky arrived while the show was in Nebraska to replace the ones injured several weeks before. Allen King was breaking a new grizzly bear and hoped to have the animal in the arena in a short time.

After a stand in Iowa, a couple in Missouri, the show went into Kansas July 22 at Osborne. Sam Dawson told the Billboard business was fairly good in the state despite the drought stricken areas but mentioned unless it rains soon shows would do well to keep out of that portion of the state. From Lincoln Center on July 27 the show turned eastward fast and was expected to be out of the drought area within a week. While in Kansas Joe Wallace became

the new boss hostler replacing Chauncey Jacobs.

The biggest day of the season came as the show reentered Missouri at Richmond on August 4. (This fact was noted by the Billboard and also Bert Rutherford had pencilled it on the original route sheet which he gave the late E. W. Adams many years ago). Mrs. Mabel James had a narrow escape at Milan, Mo. on August 7 when a car ran into a four horse team and then swerved and almost struck her. Sam Dawson struck it big in Kirksville, Mo. on Aug. 10 when he had three big stories in the local papers. The show announced it had a new lineup of acts in the sideshow but no details were given.

Generally, most shows were reporting good business as summer was almost over. The Aug. 29 Billboard had an article on how they were fairing. John Robinson in Virginia was doing good business, so was Sells-Floto in Kansas, and Hagenbeck-Wallace in Iowa. So far there had been only a few circus casualties. The T. A. Wolfe Circus which produced week long shows for the Elks and other fraternal groups folded very early in the season and was repossessed by Jerry Mugivan. The new ten car, Frank J. Taylor Circus lasted only a few weeks but otherwise most of them were getting their share of the take.

Leaving Missouri Lee then had a week in Illinois, another in Indiana, and then headed south thru Kentucky and Tennessee. At Granite City, Ill. on Aug. 14, Ben Austin, general agent of Al G. Barnes visited as did Edward L. Brannan, general agent of Robbins Bros. The week of Aug. 16-22 while Lee was in Illinois and Indiana was reported to have been very good including three straw houses. West Frankford, Ill. was termed a banner day and Mt. Vernon was also very good. The night performance at Oakland City, Ind. was lost due to a storm which hit about 6:30 P.M. causing flooding of the fairgrounds lot with about 6 inches of water.

A Billboard reporter caught the show while in was close to the Cincinnati office and said that two singing numbers had been added to the program, one with Vonnie Orman singing "Carolina Moon", a pop-

ular favorite of the day. The reporter noted all was fine with the show.

After a swing thru drought stricken Tennessee the show dipped into Alabama and then entered Georgia Sept. 15 at Dalton and remained in the state for a total of 19 stands.

The northern portion of Georgia had been hard hit by the drought of 1925 and oldtimers still recall it as having been the worst on record and recall you could wade across the Chattahoochee River at Atlanta. The southern part of the state wasn't nearly as bad off. Water, however, was scarce all over. Surprisingly, Lee Bros. did fairly well in Georgia with a couple of real big days. At Cedartown on Sept. 17 the afternoon show was packed and night business also big. The next day at Carrollton, hometown of the author's wife, people were seated on the straw at both performances. The heat at all stands was terrific and told heavily on the baggage stock. At Griffin water was severely restricted and a long haul would have had to be made to secure it but fortunately Manager Chase was able to get use of a spring near the lot. In several cities it took a doctor's plea to get enough ice and in some instances the show had to carry a supply from one stand to another.

While Lee was doing fairly well on it's southern tour a few other shows were having it rough. Gentry-Patterson had to close Sept. 18 and was taken over by the Main County Bank and Trust Co. of Paola, Kan. Theo Forstall who was with it tell it this way, "I had been with Gentry-Patterson all of 1924 and at winterquarters all that winter and went out with it in the spring of 1925. Jess Adkins, the manager, had a falling out with old Jim Patterson at the end of the 1924 season and he went back to the American Circus Corporation shows for 1925, so Pat tried to run his show himself that season, but did not make it, so we closed 'in confusion' at Conway, Ark. about a week after Labor Day on one day's notice. The show went to the Paola winter-

This fine billing daub was used to advertise the Lee show at the Stockton, Kansas, July 23, 1925 stand. Pfening Collection.



1925--Season--1925

LEE BROS. TRAINED WILD ANIMAL SHOWS

Permanent Address
BEAUMONT, TEXAS

Date	City	State	R. R.	Miles
July 20	Wymore	Neb.	C. B. & Q.	95
July 21	Superior	Neb.	C. B. & Q.	83
July 22	Osborne	Kan.	M. P.	141
July 23	Stockton	Kan.	M. P.	32
July 24	Beloit	Kan.	M. P.	66
July 25	Minneapolis	Kan.	U. P.	34
Sunday				
July 27	Lincoln Center	Kan.	U. P.	72
July 28	Plainville	Kan.	U. P.	69
July 29	Hill City	Kan.	U. P.	34
July 30	Colby	Kan.	U. P.	66
July 31	Hays	Kan.	U. P.	108
Aug. 1	Ellsworth	Kan.	U. P.	66

Mileage to date, 8,131

EVERETTE JAMES, Mail Agent

This July 1925 route card lists the July 23, 1925 Stockton, Kansas stand for Lee Bros. Trained Wild Animal Shows. Pfening Collection.

quarters for the last time and I jumped down to Ft. Valley, Ga. on Sept. 21 and joined Lee Bros. Big 4 Ring Wild Animal Show and finished the season with them."

The other show in difficulty was Chester Monahan's Gollmar Bros. Circus which was enlarged to ten cars at Peru, Ind. in September with equipment from the American Circus Corporation. Almost immediately after the enlarged show returned to its route the drought ending rains came and finished the show in a matter of weeks.

Christy Bros. was also in Georgia at the same time as Lee and while at Elberton, G. W. Christy and Bert Rutherford went to Atlanta to catch the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show. Louis Chase met them there and afterwards the trio went to the Lee Bros. lot where Christy had a good look-see as his No. 2 show.

On the run from Vidalia on October 4 one of the Lee railway cars broke down and the train had to be halted at Macon so that repairs could be made. It was on a Sunday and under Georgia law at that time a show train could not get underway during hours after midnight on Sunday, however; if the train was in motion before midnight it could proceed. However, in this case after many hours delay the train was forbidden to start again on its run to Dawson, Ga. until 12 o'clock that night.

The show was the first to play south Georgia but it was soon to be followed by John Robinson and Sparks. Robinson put out an opposition brigade but Sparks only ran want ads in the newspapers. During this time Bert and Alma Taylor left to join Al G. Barnes. Annette Bartoletti took over



Mabel James and elephant on Lee Bros. lot, season of 1925. Billy Dick Collection.

Alma's wild animal act and began riding "Rabbit" in the hunting scene. Mrs. Bert Wallace had a bad fall from her horse and Mickey King was thrown from hers but soon both were back in the performance.

I recently asked Theo Forstall to give his impression of Lee Bros. which he joined to troupe out the remaining months of the 1925 season. He responded as follows.

"Lee Bros. was quite a contrast from the Gentry-Patterson Circus I had left, which had good equipment but a poor performance. Lee Bros. was a real junk pile as far as equipment went, but they did have a pleasing wild animal type performance, something like the Al G. Barnes Circus had. And they did good business and finished with a fair sized winter bankroll, whereas the Gentry-Patterson outfit ended up flat broke. I was in the ticket wagon along with Joe McCollum. Joe had the title of treasurer, but he was not much of a bookkeeper, so when I came on about the only records they had was a day book that Louis Chase, the manager, had kept along the lines of the American Circus Corporation shows which he had been with — before and since. So for the first several weeks that I was there he had me working on making up a "column book" ledger covering the daily business from the start of the season. The show gave a daily parade and also had the "lucky boys" with flat joints — a real old time grifting show. After closing at Orange, Texas Dec. 14 we moved into winterquarters along with the Christy Bros. show at Beaumont, and I only stayed a couple of days then took off for my folks home in Montclair, N. J. The following season I went on the John Robinson Circus (thanks to Jess Adkins) and

stayed with it three full seasons until they transferred me and several others out to the Al G. Barnes Circus in California."

Press Agent Sam Dawson told it like it was when he wrote in the Oct 10, 1925 Billboard, "It is doubtful any other tented organization has had a more harassing season. Leaving Beaumont, Texas, March 15 it showed a part of Texas that had seen no rain for 8 months and encountered plenty of wind and sand. Turning north thru Colorado the show went into the Dakotas to catch the early rainstorms of spring, then up to the Canadian border, and back to the western part of Kansas where it encountered a drought which necessitated jumping from Abilene, Kan. to Richmond, Mo. It then went into fine territory in Illinois and Indiana and started south at New Albany. The first few stands in Kentucky were great, then came the drought. The show hurried through it and came to south Georgia where that territory having fine crops was the show's banner one. Rainfall in that section has been abundant."

The show was back in Alabama at Eu-
faula on Oct. 7 and then began the home-
ward trek thru the deep southern states
of Mississippi and Louisiana to Texas. The
Oct. 31 Billboard stated that business had
been pretty good with matinees being fair
and night houses big. New arrivals on the
show were Peggy Marshall from Gentry-
Patterson and Bobby Cornette of Christy
Bros. They both were working in the high
school horse acts. Weather was warm with
little dust and Mississippi produced good
business. At Lumberton, Miss. Oct. 23
Charles Sparks and Butch Fredericks of
the Sparks Circus visited and on Oct. 25
while Lee was Sundaying at Slidell, La.
about 25 members of the show entrained
to New Orleans to visit Hagenbeck-Wallace.

Finally the long southern drought was
broken and the rains came in torrents at
places causing many problems in Louisiana.
It was difficult to get off many lots and
Mansfield on Nov. 11 was lost entirely due
to heavy rains. While in the state Jimmie
Thomas and his famous high jumping com-

Midway of Lee Bros. Show, season of 1925. Pfening Collection.



edy mule joined. At DeRidder on Nov. 14
when Capt. Terrell Jacobs entered the steel
arena to present the riding lion act he was
greeted by the band playing "Here Comes
The Bride." His wife had accompanied him
to the entrance. Terrell had been married a
few hours earlier to Mattie Casey of Na-
cogdoches, Texas.

Lee Bros. entered Texas Nov. 16 at Jas-
per and for a while the weather was fine,
being described as that expected in May.
Thanksgiving dinner was served on the lot
at Marlin, Texas, Nov. 26 following the
matinee. When the show was at Yoakum
on Dec. 7 Sam Dawson told the Billboard
that business of late had not been very
good, not because of the weather but due to
the shortness of the cotton crop which had
been affected by the drought. The final day
of the long season came Dec. 14 at Orange,
Texas, birthplace of the author's brother.
The show had been out exactly nine months
to the day and then went into quarters at
Beaumont. Lee Bros. had put in the longest
season of a major railroad circus that year.
Upon closing Manager Chase announced
the show would be on the road again in
1926 squelching rumors that had come out
a few weeks earlier that Christy had re-
ceived several offers to purchase the show
and that he intended to sell it and put out
a 20 car wild west show in its place in
1926.

1926 Season

The Christy and Lee shows had basically
the same quarters arrangement as the pre-
vious winter. The free zoo located in the
agricultural building at the fairgrounds was
in charge of Allen King of Lee Bros. and
John Hoffman of Christy. On the first Sun-
day it was open some 3000 people viewed
the 40 cages and stalls of animals.

The Jan. 23, 1926 Billboard said work
at Lee quarters had been started, new cos-
tumes for parade and spec were being made,
horses were in training at the fairgrounds,
and the carpenter and blacksmith shops
were open.

The Jan. 30 Billboard stated that quarters
work for both shows was well advanced.
Repair work on wagons and cages was
complete and shop forces were now en-
gaged in building three new cages, an elec-



This photo was taken of the wild west group on a Lee Bros. lot late in the 1925 season. Pfening Collection.

tric light plant wagon, four baggage wagons, and an air calliope. Railway cars had been sent to the Pennsylvania Car Shops for necessary overhaul and as the cars were completed they were sent to the Crockett Street siding to be painted. Painting of the cages and parade vehicles this time was being done at the fairgrounds with Charles Thomas doing the air work. A shipment of new wardrobe was expected from New York.

One of the first newcomers to be signed by Lee was J. E. "Doc" Ogden as manager of the sideshow. He had been with Floyd and Howard King's Walter L. Main Circus in 1925. In early February Allen King left for Peru, Ind. and would not be with Lee in 1926. Also by mid-February both advance cars were completed and since the weather was warm some baggage stock had been brought in from the farms and hostlers were getting it in trim.

Max Fletcher was named to be in charge of the Lee advance car and in early March he said it would soon be ready to leave. Meyer Schlaum, contracting agent, under direction of Bert Rutherford was already on the job laying out the season's route.

The March 6 Billboard said the paint shops were turning out a wagon a day and had already completed 44 for both shows. It was also announced the National Printing Co. was furnishing special paper for both Christy Bros. and Lee.

The March 13 Billboard noted that a new air calliope had been received by Christy Bros. which would be the ex Barnum & Bailey tab-den which Christy had purchased along with a number of other parade wagons from the Ringling-Barnum quarters at Bridgeport. The air calliope mentioned in the January article should refer to the wagon with the carved lyre openings on the sides which Lee Bros. used. This wagon was the one that went to Ken Maynard in 1936 and is currently at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo.

What changes were made in the Lee physical equipment during the winter of 1925-26 are not known but generally it is assumed the equipment was pretty much the same as it had been in 1925.

The 1926 staff was as follows: Louis B. Chase, manager; Joseph McCollum, treasurer; Bert Rutherford, general agent and

railroad contractor; Frank O'Donnell, special agent; Sam M. Dawson, press agent; J. E. "Doc" Ogden, sideshow manager; Bert Dennis, equestrian director; Everett James, musical director; L. L. Brickner, supt. canvas; William Hartman, supt. commissary dept.; William Day, supt. of sideshow canvas; Terrell Jacobs, supt. animals; Carl Ossie, boss carpenter; Max Fletcher, mgr. adv. car No. 1; Bert Talifero, checker-up; Gordon Cavitt and J. C. Ryan, legal adjusters.

There were not too many changes from the previous season in the list of railroad shows (flat car type) going out in 1926. They included in addition to Lee Bros., Ringling-Barnum, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sparks, Gentry Bros., Walter L. Main, 101 Ranch Wild West, Christy Bros., Robbins Bros., and Heritage Bros. All paraded with exception of Ringling-Barnum, Al G. Barnes, and the three American Circus Corporations units, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and John Robinson. In addition to the railers there were about the same number of overland shows on the road, including a new 100 percent motorized show, Downie Bros., who's success in 1926 would lead them all to complete motorization within just a few years.

Lee Bros. opened its 1926 season April

Loaded flat cars of the Lee Bros. train in the Canadian Rockies, season of 1926. Red Sonnenberg Collection.



3 at Port Arthur, Texas. The April 24 Billboard reviewed the performance as follows:

"MANY ANIMAL ACTS IN LEE BROS. CIRCUS"

"The Lee Bros. Four Ring Wild Animal Circus (Authors note: the correct title was still 'shows') opened its season April 3 at Port Arthur, Tex. and had good business. The weather was ideal and many people saw the parade. The initial performance went over very smoothly and the many novel acts received plenty of applause.

"The program began with a spectacular performance of Cinderella in Jungleland and the three rings and hippodrome track were filled with performers and others bedecked in glittering costumes. More than 100 people took part.

"This was followed by pony drills by Bert Dennis and Jim McCloud, bear act by Capt. Terrell M. Jacobs; Mrs. James, perch; Harry James, contortionist; Bobbie, Lois, June, Flo, Polly, Katheenie Wande, and Little Bit Lenhart on swinging ladders; riding dogs, introduced by Gertrude Dennis and Bobbie Todd, and Charles Robinson with the dancing lions; clowns; elephants and ponies worked by June Johnson, and elephants and dogs by Flo Buckner; riding goat acts, Wanda Hunt, and Bobbie Todd, and riding lion, Miss Hale Jacobs; posing horses and ponies by Gertrude Dennis, Flo Buckner, June Johnson, Vonnie Orman and Lois LaBelle; clown number; Katheenie Healy, Little Bit Lenhart, Mrs. Everett James, and Belle Engles, iron jaw number; performing dogs worked by Bobbie Todd and Flo Buckner; high-diving dogs, J. Haley and Russell Bell; riding goats, Kim Thomas; leaping hounds, Bert Dennis; clown number, introducing the dancing dummy; camels, James Haley; elephants, June Johnson; jumping mules, Bert Dennis; tandem horses by Bobbie Todd, Gertrude Dennis, Lois LaBelle, Flo Buckner, Polly McCloud and Kaheenie Haley; and mixed group of cat animals, June Johnson; bird song, introduced by Mrs. Everett James; clown number; bucking mules; Bert Dennis and Russell Bell; leopards and pumas, presented by Bobbie Todd; 8 female lions, presented by Capt. T. M. Jacobs; big menage act; clown turn; English fox hunt concluding with high-jumping horses — Jess Coppinger riding "Don", Marion Stanley in high jumping and June Johnson and Bobbie Todd in broad jumping.

"In the sideshow, managed by John E. (Doc) Ogden are John Kelly, Punch, magic, and lecturer, Mme Lorena, mindreader; the Simpsons, impalement act; Delia Kelly, snake hypnotist; T. A. McLendon, tattooed man; Prof. Jordon, ventriloquist and illusions; Nalijie Linton, sword walker; Princess Helman, Grace Foster, Hazel Harney, Hawaiian dancers; Prof. W. J. Jackson's band and minstrels of 12 people; Edward Roskin and Jack Wilson, ticket sellers."

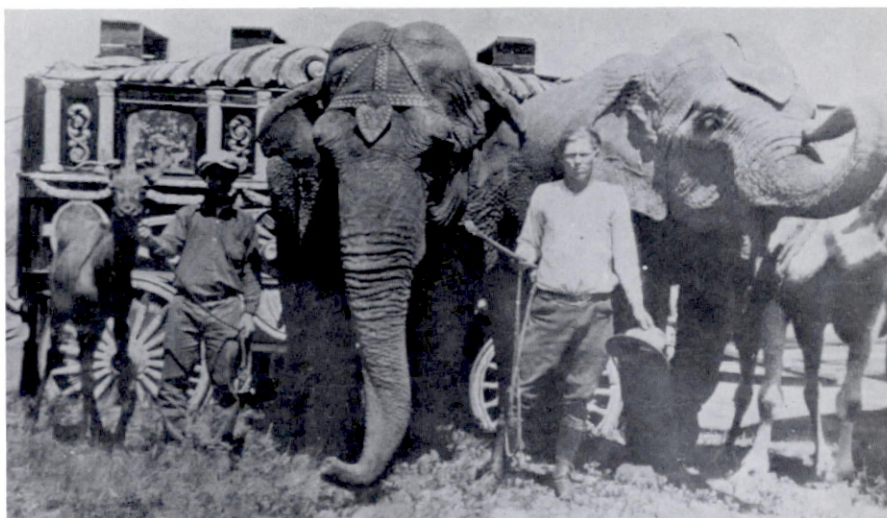
Joining the show for the 1926 season was C. A. "Red" Sonnenberg who recently described the grift activities on the show in his colorful and unimitable manner as follows.

"Now for the gentlemen of the various Pastimes and Amusements of the Old West, the 'Lucky Boys' in their feats of magic in the sideshow and connection. Percy Burrows — blocks and also played a spindle; 'Big Joe' Martineau — nut player (shell game) and broad tosser (three card monte); connection men, Frankie Orman and J. C. 'Smarty' McBride; booster handlers and outside men, Hiram Garrison, 'Corn Beef' Conley; C. A. Red Sonnenberg and Mike Hall; 'Milwaukee Whitey' Lewis, hop scotch board, and Louie Garger, 'big store'."

After the opening the show played eight stands in east Texas, including on April 10, Tyler, birthplace of the author, and then moved northward rapidly up the Mississippi Valley thru Arkansas, Missouri and into Illinois, April 24, at Sparta. The show was in Indiana for ten stands beginning at Mitchell on April 28 and Red Sonnenberg recalls while in that state the show had considerable opposition from the John Robinson Circus. Also while in Indiana Bert Bowers of the American Circus Corporation visited and at St. Mary's, Ohio on May 10, general agent Bert Rutherford came on for a visit.

Lee Bros. received a lot of rain during it's early weeks which was in marked contrast to the drought conditions of a year ago, but Manager Chase said business held up okay when the sun did come out.

After a few stands in Michigan Lee Bros. entered Ontario, May 20, at Sarnia for a lengthy tour of Canada. A total of 28 stands were played in Ontario alone and while there the show encountered some opposition from Sparks Circus. Actually only two towns were played by the two shows,

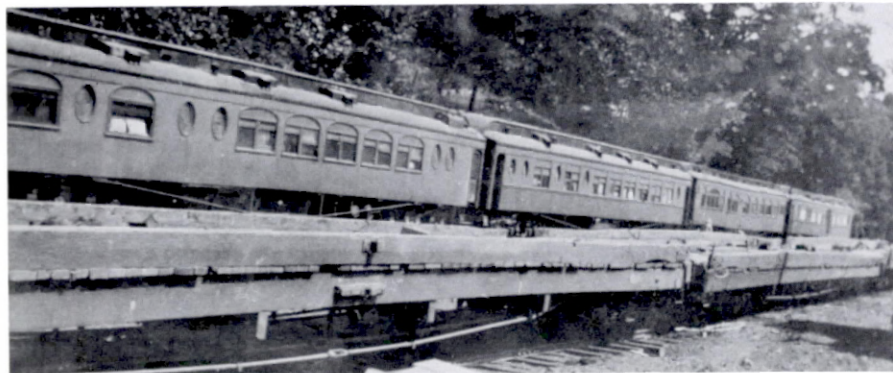


Eugene "Arky" Scott on right with Lee Bros. two elephants, "Rubber" and "Babe", season of 1926. On left is an elk with a broken leg in splints and unidentified handler. In background is the Orchestral choir tableau wagon. Pfening Collection.

Owen Sound, which had Lee Bros. on May 24 and Sparks on Aug. 14, and North Bay while Lee played June 9 and Sparks Aug. 5 but this was traditional Sparks territory and considerable "wait" paper was put up in the area however Sonnenberg says Lee Bros. did okay despite it.

Leaving Ontario the show entered Manitoba, June 22, at Selkirk and after five stands in the province proceeded to Saskatchewan for eight more. July 7 saw the show at Vegreville, Alberta and the Canadian tour was concluded with a stand at Lethbridge on July 14. Generally Canadian business was real good despite some bad weather at places. The tour in the western provinces saw considerable opposition, coming from Elmer H. Jones two car Cooper Bros. Circus which was usually ahead of Lee and from the Conklin and Garrett Carnival which was playing the expositions usually two a week. The 15 car Heritage

Golden Bros. flat cars and coaches, season of 1924. This was the rail equipment used by Lee Bros. in 1925-26. Author's Collection.



Bros. Circus was also in the area but a comparison of the Lee and Heritage routes indicate they did not play the same towns. Sonnenberg recalled that all of these shows had considerable grift and a lot of heat was generated in many towns. Sonnenberg opines that the folks in Western Canada in those days "were well taken care of."

Lee returned to the states with a stand at Sweetgrass, Mont. on July 15 where Red says business was nothing but prairie dogs and a few Indians. Business took a decided dip back in the homeland.

The show next proceeded through Montana and played a number of stands in the vicinity of the Idaho-Washington border and after a couple of stands in Oregon headed back into Idaho and then eastward through Wyoming.

Writing in the July 31 Billboard Sam Dawson reported the show had eight profitable weeks in Canada and remarked that so far there had not been any hot weather. While in the Northwest Heritage Bros. was close by and much visiting took place between personnel of the two shows.

In early August a cyclone destroyed much of the winterquarters property Christy had used in Beaumont and he announced he would have to establish quarters elsewhere and said possibly he might choose a site close to New York City.

During the next few weeks there was little news of the show as it played stands in Nebraska, Colorado, and Kansas. The August 14 Billboard did mention that the show had purchased a new tractor which would be a great help in moving wagons to and from the lot. It was noted that Capt. Terrell Jacobs was working the big lion group and Lucille Todd the mixed group of leopards and pumas. The menage and high jumping horse acts were looked after by equestrian director, Bert Dennis. An act known as the "Only Jalvan" joined the performance.

The September 4 Billboard stated that business for the show continued satisfactory but there had been a scarcity of labor since wheat harvest time had set in, however no performances had been lost because of de-

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING THIS SEASON

LEE BROS. BIG 4 RING WILD ANIMAL SHOWS

Dalton, one day only Tuesday, September 15th

The World's Largest Trained Wild Animal Exhibition



Newly added Fairyland Spectacle "Cinderella in Jungleland". The most dazzling, pretentious display ever presented under the "White Tops." An act unparalleled in the history of amusements, beautiful girls, wonderful thoroughbred horses.

4 Rings, 3 stages, 10 acres of tents, 4 bands, 40 clowns. Herd of elephants, drove of Camels. Big double menagerie.

MILE LONG GRAND FREE STREET PARADE AT 11 A. M.

DON'T MISS IT.

TWO COMPLETE PERFORMANCES, AFTERNOON AT 2, NIGHT AT 8:00.

The Lee newspaper ads used stock cuts and were made up by each paper. This one was used in Dalton, Georgia, in 1925. Pfening Collection.

lays of any kind. It mentioned that Fred Grottemier was a wrestler in the aftershow concert and Tex Winshester was marksman.

When Lee Bros. was at Raton, N. M. on August 28 Hagenbeck-Wallace was only a few miles away at Trinidad, Colo. and much visiting took place between the two

June Stickney (Woolrich) in front of the three diamond mirror tableau wagon on the Golden Bros. lot in 1924. Both June and the wagon were on Lee Bros. in 1925-26. Art Doc Miller Collection.



shows. Manager Chase spent the entire day with H-W. At dawn that day the Billboard correspondent noted that something occurred that comes once in a lifetime. When the Hagenbeck-Wallace train was moving toward Trinidad thru the Raton tunnel the Lee Bros. train passed on the opposite track enroute to Raton.

After a week in New Mexico the show went into Texas at Pecos, Sept. 4, and remained in the state for three weeks. Lee was now having the first warm weather of it's season and got some good business but labor remained a factor as now many workmen headed off for the cotton fields. William H. Stokes, an animal trainer and menage rider, joined the show.



Lee Bros. went into Oklahoma Sept. 25 at Sayre and while in the state some heavy rains came and two stands were lost. A number of men were hired from the Heritage Bros. advance car when it closed at Kingfisher, Okla. The folding of the Heritage show was one of the few circus casualties of the 1926 season, which business-wise was better for most shows than was 1925.

The show went into Kansas for two stands and then came back into Oklahoma where it remained unit reentering Texas Oct. 31 at Perryton. The remainder of the season was spent in the home state where it claimed business continued to be good. The final stand was at Freeport on Nov. 20. Sam Dawson summed up the season rather briefly mentioning that at times the weather was severe and labor scarce but the big top went up on schedule. It is believed the 1926 season which was several weeks shorter was not as profitable as 1925 overall.

In the meantime Christy had abandoned the idea of seeking quarters near New York City but instead secured a suitable site at South Houston, Texas to winter both the Christy and Lee shows and upon conclusion of their seasons they were sent to the new site.

Christy elected to shelve Lee Bros. for the 1927 season and go with a single show, Christy Bros., which was enlarged to 25

cars using ex Lee property for the additional equipment. Sometime later he put the remainder of the Lee Bros. equipment up for sale and advertised it in the Billboard.

A buyer for the Lee property was found in the winter of 1927-28. A young man, Wortham A. Snell, nephew of the late C. A. Wortham, big name in carnival circles, was framing a 15 car show at Alexandria, La. which was scheduled to open April 7, 1928 under the title of Snell Bros. Wild West Show. He secured three steel 72 ft. flat cars and a stock car from the Johnny J. Jones Exposition (Carnival) and gave Christy a down payment for the Lee Bros. property and had it shipped to his quarters in Alexandria. Arthur Hoffman was to be

Lee Bros. sideshow personnel on lot, season of 1925. Left to right, Billy Dick, Nora Keager, Cleo Gill (tall girl) Dolly Eisenberg, and Mile Rosetta. In back is one of the show's tableau wagons. Billy Dick Collection.

manager of the show and D. C. Hawn and E. L. Brannen, general agents. Snell said he had received a 110 ft. with three 40's big top, presumably with the Lee equipment. Snell had no previous circus experience and soon ran out of money before he ever opened and as Red Sonnenberg put it, "took it on the Arthur Duffy," leaving Christy to have to come and take his property back to South Houston.

Christy continued to advertise the Lee property for sale but the great depression was just around the corner and that killed off any hope of disposal of it for several years. The Christy Bros. 20 car show closed in mid-season 1930, after first eliminating 10 cars a few weeks earlier in an attempt to make it, and returned to South Houston quarters never to take to the road again.

Christy did put out a medium sized motorized circus in 1933 and 1934 using the title of Lee Bros. and managed by his brother, Harold, and following that continued to rent to various shows his "circus unit" consisting of elephants, trained horses, and ponies until World War II.



In the spring of 1936 Christy sold a number of wagons and other equipment to Ken Maynard for his proposed wild west show which never really got started and the idea soon abandoned. The bulk of this equipment had been on the 1925-26 Lee Bros. show but some of it had been on Christy Bros. including the Swan Bandwagon, Whiskers cage, Beauty tableau, and a cook-house wagon. The Orchestmelchoir wagon and the Lee Bros. air calliope were among the group going to Maynard and both of these are now at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo. Likewise a couple of baggage wagons said to have been on the Lee show came to Baraboo by the same route. Another Lee baggage wagon got to Baraboo an entirely different way. A man by name of Stanley Collins of Prophetstown, Ill.,

The 1934 George Christy Lee Bros. Show is pictured here on the lot. Pfening Collection.

who had worked for Red Sonnenberg when he had the programs on Ringling-Barnum, bought a Lee Bros. baggage wagon from Christy and had it shipped from South Houston to Prophetstown but Collins died before he ever got around to putting the wagon to it's intended use. It ended up in a farmer's field and thru the efforts of Sonnenberg it was rescued by the Circus World Museum and added to it's collection.

Since Christy's last use of the Lee title in 1934 it has been used by at least two different parties since then. In 1944-45 Bob Atterbury had out a small motorized circus titled Lee Bros. and in the late 1940's Lee

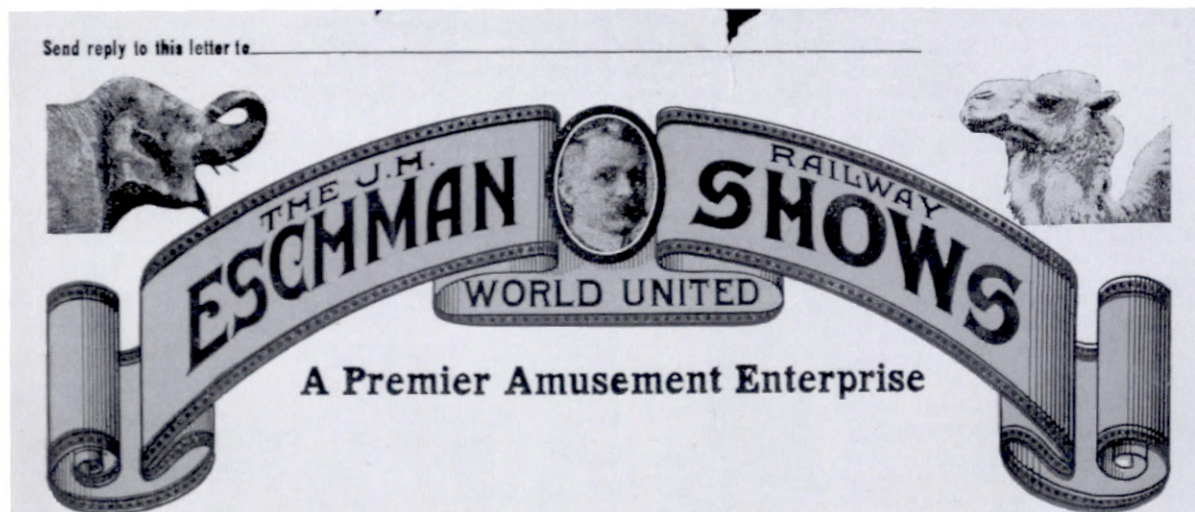
and Harvey Brison used the title on their truck show. Possibly since then the Lee Bros. title has been used in some isolated instance.

For help rendered in the preparation of this article I would like to sincerely thank Red Sonnenberg, Theo Forstall and Fred Pfening Jr.

Epilog

We had intended to use a source of "new" Lee Bros. photos with this article but so far we have not obtained them. Should they come in at any future date they will be run as a supplement. Likewise we had intended to use portions of the diary Red Sonnenberg kept when he was on the Lee show but unfortunately Red has temporarily misplaced it. Should it turn up we plan to use it in the supplement.

Bill Woodcock's Circus Letterheads



The J. H. Eschman World United Railway Shows toured from 1910 through 1917. The show moved on 7 cars in 1915 and moved up to the ten car class for its last two years, 1916 and 1917. The letterhead has the title in black on a yellow background and a red border.

A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE HISTORY OF MADISON SQUARE GARDEN AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE RINGLINGS IN THE HISTORY AND AIR CONDITIONING OF THE GARDEN.

By Dr. Robert James Loeffler

PART TWO

Historically, there has always been a question whether W. C. Coup or Phineas T. Barnum first envisioned the construction of a great Roman Hippodrome in the city of New York. W. C. Coup indicates it was his idea but Barnum refutes the claim. Barnum in his autobiography states that he sailed for Europe in September 1873. He planned to tour Europe and visit the International Exhibition at Vienna, Austria. The exhibition was opened on May 1, 1873, by the Emperor in the presence of the Empress. It closed on November 2, 1873. Barnum says he reached Vienna just ten days before its closing (app. October 24). Previously, he had visited London, Cologne, Leipzig, Berlin and Dresden. The exhibition was concerned with bird and animal life, forestry, agriculture and economics. Apparently, Barnum was not in attendance for the benefit of his circus enterprise because his agents had or were in the process of obtaining materials in Europe for the circus.

Returning to our original question it appears that Coup and other circus officials were behind the move to erect the amphitheater on the old railroad site in New York in October 1873, since Barnum was enjoying himself in Europe. One can assume that Barnum allowed the officials in New York, particularly W. C. Coup, to decide where to exhibit in New York in the summer of 1873. Again Col. Sturtevant lends credence to this opinion when he indicates Barnum was always an inactive partner, if not a silent one in the circus building. Furthermore, Sturtevant remarks:

Coup did not travel on the road that year of 1873. If Barnum had been a circus manager, here was his great opportunity to have taken over the executive functions, but he was too busy promoting his own personal popularity. He would give a few perfunctory orders to officials, but was afraid of betraying his ignorance of the true state of business affairs, that his orders were usually meaningless and of trivial moment. His greatest interest was the sale of his autobiography. The agent in charge of sales was regarded as the most important employee on the show by Barnum...²⁷

Sturtevant also writes that Coup was engaged the following year after the Hippodrome fire (1873) with the details of construction and plans for the great new

enterprise. It would appear Coup secured the lease for the use of the Harlem Railroad property and went ahead with construction plans. Barnum states in his autobiography:

While at Berlin, I received letters from my Manager, Coup, and Treasurer, Hurd, saying they would be able to secure a short lease of the Harlem Railroad property in New York . . . , containing several acres, for the purpose of carrying out my long-cherished plan of exhibiting a Roman Hippodrome, Zoological Institute, Aquaria, and Museum of unsurpassable extent and magnificence. I immediately telegraphed them to take the lease, and within twenty-four hours from that time I was in telegraphic communication with seventeen European cities where I knew were the proper parties to aid me in carrying out a grand and novel enterprise.²⁸

On the other hand, Coup in his *Sawdust and Spangles* writes very briefly on the topic of the Hippodrome but indicates Barnum absolutely declined to join him in the enterprise until Coup informed him that he had plenty of offers of capital and did not need his help. Then, Barnum determined to join the enterprise. These remarks tend to discredit Barnum's statements completely.

Therefore, one is confronted with the statements of the two circus partners. However, there is reason for doubting Mr. Bar-

The Barnum & Bailey Circus opened in New York under canvas in the spring of 1890, for the first time. However in 1891 the show opened the season in the new 1890 Madison Square Garden. The heading of the newspaper-style program of the opening week is shown here.

THE WORLD'S GRANDEST, LARGEST, BEST AMUSEMENT INSTITUTION.

Honestly Conducted
Honorably Acquired
Traditionally
Advised

CAPITAL INVESTED
\$3,500,000
DAILY EXPENSE
\$7,300.00

PERMANENT
WINTER QUARTERS
BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

J. & H. MAYER,
PUBLISHERS

THE
Barnum
& Bailey
GREATEST
SHOW ON EARTH

• P.T. BARNUM • J.A. BAILEY •
• EQUAL OWNERS •

CONDUCTED ON SOUND BUSINESS PRINCIPLES.
The Real Source of all the Best Amusement Ideas

64 CARS.
4 TRAINS.
27 TENTS COVERING 10 ACRES.
1200 PEOPLE EMPLOYED.
1000 LIVING WONDERS.
100 HORSES WORTH \$30,000.
100 CAGES OF WILD BEASTS.
A GREAT
WORLD'S FAIR.

FREE DISTRIBUTION
AT EVERY
PERFORMANCE.

COPYRIGHTED—21st YEAR. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 1891. PUBLISHED DAILY

Faye Braathen in *Hold Your Horses*, writes:

As early as 1849 Phineas had thought to retire but had found that a life of idleness on his sumptuous Bridgeport estate, Iranistan, was synonymous with boredom. Older in '69, Barnum might well desire a greater degree of leisure than he had previously known, but this would leave the younger showman, Coup, more free to be effectively active in the management of the bigger and better circus of which he dreamed.³⁰

But this is exactly what Barnum permitted in the fall of 1873 — he sailed for Europe supposedly to visit the International Exhibition at Vienna — and not to build up his circus performance. This did not enter his mind until he learned the railroad property had been secured. He left Coup in America to proceed with his ideas, dreams and plans for the New York Hippodrome. Coup's statement in *Sawdust and Spangles* intimates that Barnum was ready to join him in the Hippodrome venture only after it appeared Coup was not going to need his financial help. As a result Barnum's name might not be associated with the new venture and this fact the old showman could not tolerate. Coup had proven his superior talents and ability many times to Barnum, and Barnum was not about to be left out of this project. As owner of the circus Barnum's name had to be attached to the proposed Hippodrome and the press accorded him this right. Coup's name was left in the background as Barnum knew it would be.

A search was also made into the municipal records of New York City in the hope that more light might be shed on the circumstances surrounding the construction of the Hippodrome. It was also hoped that more might be learned of the role played by Barnum, Coup, Hurd and others. The Municipal Archives and Record Center of New York specializes in the preservation of the mayor's papers but a search of the correspondence between the years 1871 and 1875 revealed absolutely nothing. It was also discovered that blueprints of many New York City buildings are not retained after a three year period, especially in the 1870's and 1880's, except in very rare instances. The Hippodrome was not considered an outstanding building in 1874.

One of the most rewarding pieces of evidence to indicate that W. C. Coup was behind the construction of Madison Square Garden is the fact that he opened his own circus at Madison Square Garden with a gigantic parade on September 6, 1881. The Newspapers announced

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
Brilliant reopening by the original projector,
W. C. COUP³¹

and a day or two later the paper stated:

Reopened by the original proprietor,
W. C. COUP

Madison Square Garden has been entirely refitted, decorated and elegantly embellished by W. C. Coup.³²

As far as known, P. T. Barnum, did not protest or contest the above advertisement in the *New York Times* or any other news-



MADISON SQ. GARDEN **MARCH 28**
FOUR WEEKS and THREE DAYS, Commencing THURSDAY,
NIGHT PARADE ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27TH, WEATHER PERMITTING.

The first inside page of the 18 page 1895 advertising booklet announces the opening in the Garden. Pfening Collection.

paper. Therefore, the evidence is in Coup's favor that both the New York Aquarium and Madison Square Garden were his ideas. As far as this writer is concerned the question is closed.

It also appears that it was a mere coincidence that Barnum was in London, in December 1873, when it became apparent that the Hippodrome would be a reality and he henceforth was able to purchase Messrs. John and George Sanger's "Congress of Monarchs," in January (4th) 1874. Barnum used all the plant, wardrobe and paraphernalia of the latter production for his own "Congress of Nations" which he featured in the New York Hippodrome in 1874. In fact, Phineas obtained the publicity he desired on the new building but largely through massive advertising of the "Congress of Nations" which, of course, he was solely responsible for. Actually, the beauty of the building itself was nothing to write home about but it was a massive structure and it provided the impetus for the future and more impressive Madison Square Garden of 1890.

In conclusion it is my opinion that W. C. Coup envisioned the idea of a New York Roman Hippodrome and the actual construction details were left to him, circus treasurer, S. H. Hurd and other circus officials. Barnum was only indirectly concerned with the construction of a new circus building. This was largely due to his advanced age and his apparent indifference to circus matters at that time.

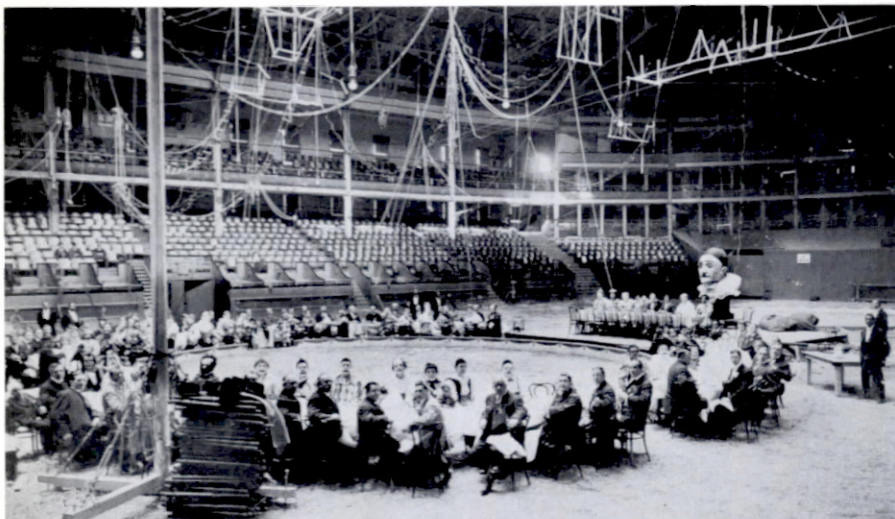
It should be recalled that earlier mention was made of the fact that the word circus was not stressed in advertisements about the Hippodrome. One reason may be that in the 1870's the public still disliked the circus and to offset this, clever Barnum the museum, menagerie, and hippodrome aspects of the entertainment at the mam-

moth new amusement center. The title, P. T. Barnum's Great Travelling Museum, Menagerie, Caravan & Hippodrome certainly reflected these attitudes and time. The show had three separate tents museum, menagerie and big top; all were connected by sidewalls and one ticket admitted one to the entire show. Newspaper ads do not mention performers, clowns or circus acts. In fact, the circus aspect was soft-peddled to the point that the advertisements stressed "no need to see the circus performance unless he chooses to do so." All of the trappings and costumes were beautiful and costly and during the performance Roman chariot races, Numidian and Babylonian horsemen, Knights of the Crusades, English stag hunts and a parade of Nations plus many odd and unusual attractions were featured. Another reason for the type of entertainment given at the Hippodrome is that Barnum wanted to pattern his Hippodrome after that brought back from England in 1853 by Seth B. Howes. It was Howes who induced Henri Franconi to leave his Paris hippodrome and bring his great troupe of stupendous equestrians to America. Lastly, both Howes and Barnum were highly impressed with circus productions in England and also the highly ornamented band wagons and other parade wagons.

Now it is time to take up our story of Madison Square Garden and air conditioning.

It was only a few years after the completion of the Hippodrome that many New Yorkers began to talk of the "shabby old place." One such critic writes:

Thus at last it became very clear, on the one hand, that New York needed a more seemly structure for such purposes and, on the other hand, that the old site should be retained . . . New York would have been content had any decent-looking, well-planned, fireproof building replaced the patched-up, grimy, drafty, combustible old shed; and it should be forever grateful to a few good and



The inside of the 1890 Madison Square Garden is clearly shown in this photo of an 1897 press party held in the arena. Pfening Collection.

wealthy citizens who gave it so much more than it asked . . . ³³

Finally, on August 7, 1889 workmen began the task of tearing down the old Hippodrome and thus ground was broken for a new building that would continue to be called Madison Square Garden. It was erected on the site of the 1874-74 Hippodrome. However, before this became a reality it is evident that the Madison Square Garden Company was not fully convinced that the erection of a new structure was the thing to do, even though plans had been drawn up. Therefore let us examine the record from stories in the *New York Times*:

The *New York Times* for August 8, 1889 (p. 6, col. 2) reported:

TEARING DOWN THE OLD GARDEN

When the circus comes to town next Spring it will probably find an elaborate amphitheatre to show itself in instead of old Madison Square Garden. The work of tearing the present building down began yesterday. The Madison Square Garden Company has given out the contract for the new building, which is to include so many things and of which so much has been said and written. Now the Officers of the company say that the work will be pushed with all speed.

The Building Committee is still discussing some details of the plans, but the general outlines, as already published, will be followed out. The stock of the company is all taken and the books closed July 31. The company is capitalized for a million and a half.

The contractor will first complete the amphitheatre, for his contract calls for the completion of that by March 20, so that it will be ready for circuses or anything else. The rest of the structure, which will include ballrooms, concert hall, and a theatre, as well as other things, will be finished, according to contract, June 20.

The company has awarded the management of the enterprise to the firm of

Samuel French & Son, and T. Henry French of the Broadway Theatre will be the actual manager.

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By later March 22, 1889 (p. 3, col. 1) the *Times* reported:

IN AND ABOUT THE CITY THE PLANS COMPLETED WORK ON THE NEW MADISON SQUARE GARDEN SOON TO BEGIN

As finally determined upon and announced yesterday by McKinn, Mead & White, the architects, the plans for the new Madison Square Garden do not vary greatly from the description of them heretofore published in *THE TIMES*. The elevation shows an imposing quadrangular structure of the order of architecture known as Italian Renaissance, of yellow pressed brick and white terra-cotta masonry, iron, and glass. It is to be built in two sections — one facing Madison Avenue slightly raised above the other, with an observation tower rising from Twenty-Sixth Street front, where the two sections meet, to a height of 300 feet. The whole structure will be surrounded by an arcade extending over the sidewalk to the curb line on every side.

The amphitheatre, 310 x 195 feet in extent, will have a track, one-tenth of a mile in length and an arena 122 x 226 feet in extent in the form of an ellipse . . . The seating capacity will be 5,060, or double the capacity of the present Garden . . . A large section of the roof is arranged so that it can be opened in fair weather when used as a Summer garden or for Summer night concerts or conventions the amphitheatre will hold 12,000 people without discomfort or crowding. The facilities for stabling in the basement and underneath the seats of the amphitheatre for horse shows and circuses will be greatly improved over the old arrangement . . .

In the section fronting on Madison Avenue, beginning with the basement, there are the boiler, engine, and dynamo rooms, completely arranged kitchens, and storerooms, and serving rooms communicating by dumb waiters with the upper floors . . . The architects say: 'The plan of this hall has been very carefully studied upon the actual construction of Wagner's theatre at Bayreuth, and is in accord with the most advanced theories of acoustics.' . . . It is expected that work will be begun on the new building directly after the Washington inauguration celebration. The building is to be ready for dedication in the Fall.

And the *Times* on December 16, 1889 (p. 6, col. 4):

MAKING RAPID PROGRESS THE WORK ON THE NEW MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

The big building which is being erected so rapidly on site of the old Madison Square Garden is a source of constant interest to persons who use lower Madison-avenue as a promenade. The foundations, which were begun a comparatively short time ago, are now topped by massive-looking buff walls to the height of quite twenty-five feet, showing the conformation of the heavy piers which will form so striking a feature of the facade.

One of the Directors of the new company, while speaking of the progress of the building, said yesterday that there was not the slightest doubt that the part of the building in which the great amphitheatre

theatre is to be placed will be completed in the early part of March. 'This means a great deal of work,' he said. 'But our contract with Barnum calls for this limit, and we are going to fill our part of the contract. The interior supports and divisions of the amphitheatre are already in place, and the iron girders and the gallery divisions may be seen rising on a level with the exterior walls so that the backbone of the work is practically completed so far as the raising of the walls to their proper height and the roofing of the structure are concerned. They are things which may be very materially hastened. By increasing the number of workmen the decorations may be hastened to completion in the beginning of 1891. There is a very good chance that the entire structure will cost very nearly \$100,000 more than was at first intended. This, however, has not yet been determined upon, and will not be until after the Spring circus has been here.'

The next item in the *Times* was on May 15, 1889 (p. 3, col. 5) and it turns out to be rather a surprise:

At the annual meeting of the stockholders of the Madison Square Garden, held yesterday at 30 Broad-street, all the old officers and Directors were re-elected except Mr. Gulliver, a Director, in whose place J. P. Paulding was chosen. The question as to what should be done with the Garden provoked a lengthy debate. The subscriptions to the project of erecting a new amusement building according to the elaborate plans of Stanford White, the architect, have not been sufficient in amount to warrant the success of the undertaking, and some of the stockholders were in favor of promptly disposing of the property upon an advantageous terms as could be secured. The matter was left to the discretion of the Board of Directors, with power to act.

On June 26th (p. 8, col. 3) we read:

The Directors of the Madison Square Garden Company are considering propositions which may lead either to a sale outright of the property or to building operations on a splendid scale. A drawback to the latter, which was the original intention, is lack of funds. Quite half of the stock of the company awaits dispersal. It was supposed when the stock was offered to the public at 75 — said to the ground-floor price — that it would be eagerly sought. Very little of it, however, found a market, and news at the company's office became scarce. While the Directors were waiting for an idea or funds an offer for the property was received through an agency that was supposed to represent foreign capital. The offer is said to allow a profit on the purchase price, but it is not yet tempting enough to be taken up. Pending further developments the Directors are giving nominal consideration to three plans of building out of thirty submitted. These three call for respective outlays of \$800,000, \$1,000,000, and \$1,250,000. No rea-

son is given why the enterprise should lag except that it does not yet seem to have struck luck.

No further information was found in the *Times* about the new Garden until on August 8, 1889 (p. 6, col. 2). The financial problems were apparently solved as the newspaper reports that:

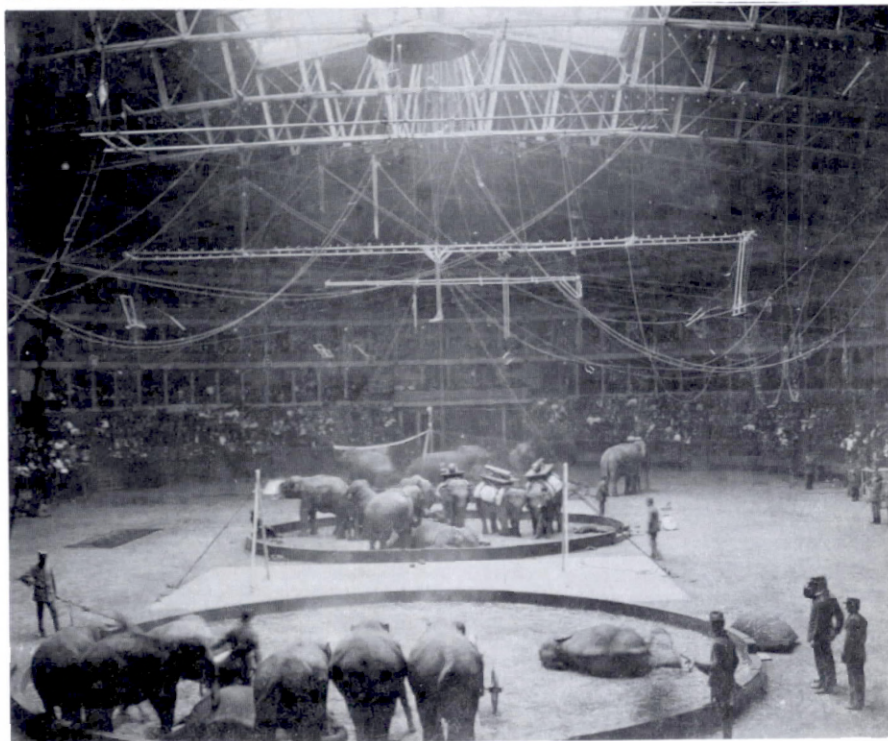
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The contractor will first complete the amphitheatre, for his contract calls for the completion of that by March 20, so that it will be ready for circuses or anything else. The rest of the structure, which will include ballrooms, concert hall, and a theatre, as well as other things, will be finished, according to contract, June 20.

Another view of the 1890 Garden shows the skylight and superstructure. The photo was probably taken in the late 1890s. Harold Dunn Collection.



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Members of the stockholders of the Madison Square Garden Company included J. Pierpont Morgan, James T. Woodward, Charles Lanier, Alfred Darling, Hiram Hitchcock, Darius Mills, Charles Crocker, G. S. Bowdoin, Adrian Iselin, Edward D. Adams, and Cornelius Fellows.

Architects of the 1890 Garden were Messrs. McKinn, Mead and White, an illustrious architectural firm. The business manager was Jimmy Morrissey.

The 1890 Madison Square Garden was planned to a great extent for the presentation of horse shows. Several of the aforementioned organizers were spirits in the New York Horse Show Association. Thus a building designed for horse shows was equally suitable for circus performances.

The Madison Square Garden covers the whole block which is bounded by Fourth and Madison Avenues and by Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Streets. Although the main desire of its founders was to supply New York with a large covered amphitheater, our soil, in any central location, is so precious that no foot of the site could be left unused. Therefore, while the middle of the block gives room for the amphitheatre, 300 by 200 feet in diameter, all the rest of it is filled out to the street-lines, with other apartments, offices, restaurants etc., a theater, and a concert hall . . . 34

The theater was 120 by 90 feet and seated about 1200 persons. It became known as the Madison Square Garden Theatre. It was located at the northwest corner of Madison Avenue and Twenty-seventh Street. There was also a roof garden, foyer or supper room, and ballroom.

Exterior stone was pale yellow brick and white terra-cotta. "The exterior—a great straight-walled rectangle, everywhere roofed at the same levels except where a tower—(a magnificent reproduction of the Giralda Tower of Seville) springs high from the southern side—"35 At the top of the tower was the pedestal of the statue of Golden Diana.

The amphitheatre had annexes which included an exhibition hall and accommodations for hundreds of animals below the level of the street.

"The moment the MSG was finished, it became the center for the popular amusements and, to a great extent, for the fashionable amusements of New York."36

Naturally, its most peculiar usefulness resided in the amphitheatre, which, even when its floor was wholly occupied by performers, had fixed seats for six thousand spectators, and, when chairs were placed on the floor, could accommodate six thousand more, or twelve thousand if they did not mind being crowded.37 Acoustics were not

acoustics were poor, but he also agreed the music of that eventful evening and several nights thereafter was excellent:

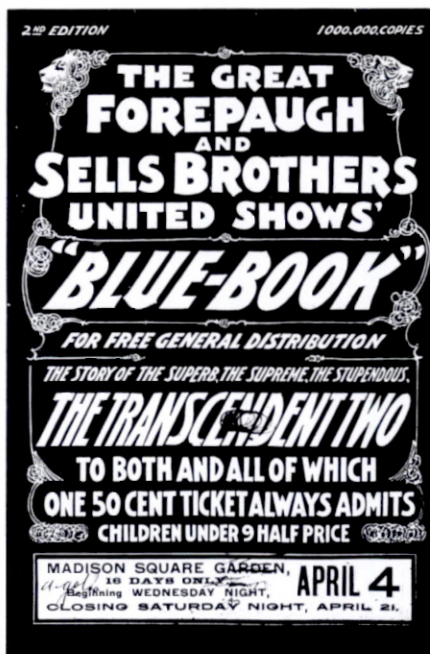
THE MUSIC OF THE WALTZ

The opening of the Madison Square Garden was an event of interest, but it was disagreeable to discover that, like the new Lyceum, the hall seemed not to be acoustically satisfactory. The scene was brilliant, and as a resort for summer evenings as well as for the evenings of other seasons, it will be undoubtedly very poor. The occasion was interesting also as introducing the STRAUSS orchestra to New York. But it was found that the force of the orchestra was unequal to the size of the hall.

That it is an admirably drilled body of musicians for its peculiar work there is no doubt. The father of Mr. STRAUSS was the father of the modern waltz, and his band preserves all the traditions of the music to which fifty years ago the gayest circles of Europe and America glided and swayed with delight. The waltz music had a singular charm. It is to be enjoyed not by comparison, but for itself, for its own suggestions and associations. Our recent musical taste in the city had been trained in a somewhat different school, and we are doubtless disposed to greet the STRAUSS measures as Berlin greeted FLOTOW'S—"Ach Himmel! Tanzmusik!"

But it is precisely for the enjoyment of such music that the Strauss orchestra should be heard. The sentiment and romance of the waltz are expressed most fully and sympathetically by DEQUINCY, whose glowing words can be now tested by listening to the most famous waltz orchestra in the world. . . 38

Flower shows, dog shows, and balls were held here but they did not look their best,



While the Barnum show was in Europe the Forepaugh-Sells show opened in the Garden in 1899, 1900, 1901 and 1902. This 1900 courier booklet advertised the opening of that circus in the Garden. Pfening Collection.

good, so speakers could not be heard from one end to the other. There were also a hundred fifty private boxes.

The editor of *Harper's Weekly* agreed the

Three lady principal riders of the Forepaugh-Sells Circus are pictured in the Garden. The photo originally appeared in the June 1900 issue of *COSMOPOLITAN* magazine. Pfening Collection.



for each left empty the mounting rows of gallery seats.

Then wait until Barnum's circus comes — every seat up to the roof will be crowded, and three-rings, by giving you three times your money's worth, will spoil your pleasure unless you have the philosophic mind which contents itself with enough. There can hardly be a better place for a big circus than this, or for a moving spectacle of any sort.

Madison Square Garden was centrally located in New York City and it was built at a critical time when it was not known whether Madison Square would remain the center of the town... where could another amusement center have been found so spacious, so attractive, or so accessible to the dwellers in all parts of the city and in all its sister cities and suburbs?³⁹

On September 13, 1890, *Harper's Weekly* had a feature article on the new Madison Square Garden and in it is given a word picture of the delightful nature of the magnificent building during the warm months of the year:

The garden is unrivalled as a place for summer entertainments. The enormous sliding skylight covers half the roof, and when it is drawn back in the evening a cool temperature is assured. Half of the space is occupied by seats, while the rear is devoted to small tables and chairs. Here a man may sit and hear excellent music while he enjoys a Perfect and should he get warm enough to wish it, a cooling drink whose inebriating qualities are nil. What more could the flaneur or the business man ask for a summer evening in town?

The roof was constructed of flat elliptical sections supported by open steel pillars, which, as well as the girders and roof itself were painted a cream color. When the large skylight in the middle of the roof was slid back one could not help but get the impression of being outside in the open air.⁴⁰

Although the new Madison Square Garden was ready for the big Barnum & Bailey Circus in March, 1890, the show refused to use the new place of play. I was not aware of the reasons for such a move until I happened across the following items in the *New York Times*:

A CHANGE OF BASE BARNUM & BAILEY DECLINE TO OCCUPY THE NEW GARDEN

There is trouble brewing between Barnum & Bailey & Co. and the Directors of the Madison Square Garden. Mr. T. Henry French, who is the manager of Barnum, Bailey & Co. had made an oral contract to occupy that place of amusement for six weeks from March 20, 1890. Mr. Bailey had even gone so far as to suggest alterations in the plans, and those suggestions were adopted.

'I do not know what is the matter with Mr. Bailey,' said Mr. French yesterday. 'He doesn't seem to know his mind ten days in succession. He has repudiated his agreement with the Madison Square Gar-

FOREPAUGH & SELLS BROTHERS ENORMOUS SHOWS UNITED

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

NEW YORK.

THE WORLD FAMOUS
METROPOLITAN HOME
OF THESE COMBINED
STUPENDOUS SHOWS.

GREATER
NEW YORK'S
GREATEST
ENTERTAINMENT.

IN ITS GREATEST ARENA
AND THE ONLY ONE
GREAT ENOUGH TO
SHOW THERE.



The Strobridge Litho Co. designed this fine poster for the Forepaugh-Sells Garden stands at the turn of the century. Plening Collection.

den management, but it is not impossible that the difference may be adjusted. It was never the intention of the promoters of the new Madison Square Garden Building to make it a permanent home for the Barnum show, as seems to have been reported. That show had to come under the rules and regulations guarding all attractions that may be given in the Garden. The Directors of the Madison Square Garden Amusement Company will meet to-morrow, when this matter will be submitted to them. There is one thing certain, however, and that is that the Madison Square Garden is not dependent on Messrs. Barnum Bailey & Co. for attractions. I have already secured a great attraction for next Summer, the name of which I am not at liberty to reveal, but it will be musical in its character. Altogether, under the circumstances, I think that we can afford to do without Messrs. Barnum, Bailey & Co. quite as well as they can afford to do without us.'

The musical attraction spoken of by Mr. French is the Vienna Orchestra. It is also possible that a circus and hippodrome may be imported for the Garden.

Mr. A. A. Stuart, the representative of Messrs. Barnum, Bailey & Co., in New York, said yesterday that he could not speak of the matter at all until the arrival of Imre Kiralfy from Europe next Saturday. Mr. Kiralfy is the agent of Barnum, Bailey & Co., and it is said that he has been sent by them to select a place in New York for 'The Greatest Show on Earth.'

The *New York Times* (Jan. 8, 1890, p. 2, col. 3) next reported:

BARNUM WILL PUT UP TENTS

The true cause of the difference between Barnum, Bailey & Co. and the Directors of the new Madison Square Garden is that the circus firm consider the new building too small for their show. The seating capacity of the arena is said to be about 4,400, all told, and Barnum & Bailey hold that is not enough, for them. They have, therefore, determined to bring their show back to America at the close of the London engagement, Feb. 15, put it into Winter quarters at Bridgeport, Conn., until April 1 or thereabouts, and then give the show in New York under tents near Central Park. The whole matter will be settled on the arrival of Messrs. Kiralfy, Cooke, and Gardner, who are due here next Friday.

It is the present purpose of Barnum & Bailey to erect a permanent building near Central Park, which shall be completed in 1891. When asked about this matter last night, Mr. T. Henry French, the manager of the new Madison Square Garden, said that the Directors of that institution met yesterday and voted to pay no further attention to Messrs. Barnum & Bailey and their show.

The next story in the *Times* (Jan. 9, 1890, p. 4, col. 7) has a London by-line:

BARNUM'S LATEST VENTURE

From Dunlop's Cable Company

London, Jan. 8 — In an interview to-day Mr. Barnum intimated that he might execute the plan he has been credited with of erecting a vast circus building in the vicinity of Central Park, New York. He had subscribed \$20,000 for stock in the new Madison Square enterprise. This was on condition that the building's construction would allow of an exhibition of his 'greatest show.' This

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.
LAST WEEK 1902
OF THE
4-PAW SELLS BROS.'
CIRCUS

Box office open at 9 A. M. Don't buy tickets on sidewalk.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
IN A BRIEF SEASON ONLY
COMMENCING **WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON** **MARCH 18**

home to see the wife and children. Mr. Gardner went up to see 'Tody' Hamilton, Mr. Barnum's agent in this city, during the afternoon, and had a consultation with him.

All the plans for the stupendous building which the great circus firm proposes to put up in this city have been completed, and it only remains now to select the site on which to erect the building. Several plots of ground are under consideration, and one of them will be selected within a very few days. It will, it is said, be somewhere on the west side, and in the neighborhood of Eighty-sixth street. Just as soon as the site is selected work on the new building itself will be begun, and the structure will go up in short order.

We know that this grandiose plan never materialized. Instead, Barnum was forced to set up tents at 110th street and Fifth avenue; the show was there between April 12 and May 3, 1890. Nevertheless, an agreement was finally reached between the circus and the Madison Square Garden Company. The *Times* on January 18, 1891 carried the brief item about it:

BARNUM & BAILEY AT THE GARDEN

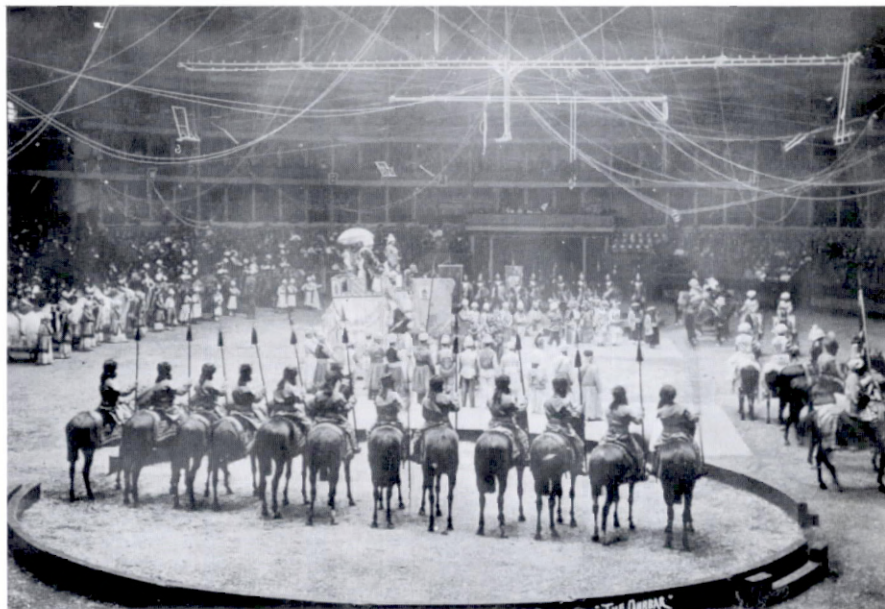
The lease was executed yesterday between the Madison Square Garden Company and Barnum & Bailey, proprietors of the 'Greatest Show on Earth,' for the term of five weeks from March 22 next at a rental of \$30,000, or \$1,000 per day for each day of exhibition. By the terms of the lease Barnum & Bailey are privileged to make such alterations in the building as the requirements of the show demand, to increase the seating capacity, change the boxes, alter the horse stalls and other portions.

On the first floor will be three equestrian rings, two elevated stages for Olympian games, and the hippodrome racing track. The management of wild beasts, cages of animals, and amphibious animals will be placed in the basement, while the great height of the interior will permit of the greatest aerial display this country has ever seen, hosts of the finest mid-air performers being especially engaged for this department.

The engagement covered the period March 26 to April 25, 1891.

The *Times* on June 24, 1890 under the heading MADISON SQUARE GARDEN commented about certain changes in garden policy:

Some changes have been made at the Madison Square Garden which will have a tendency to increase the popularity of that Summer-nights' resort. These were introduced to the public for the first time last evening. The parquette, so-called has been stripped of its rows of immovable seats, and in their place now appear the circular tables and chairs so familiar to the patrons of the German beer gardens. The next step will be the introduction of light wines and beers, and this will be taken, so the management promises, in a few days. The parquet will then be



The 1904 opening spec of the Barnum show was the "Durbar of Delhi." This photo in the Garden that year shows that the spec was not unlike the "Durbar" spec of the middle 1930s. Bob Good Collection.

devoted to those who love music, a mild beverage, and the soothing weed, all under one roof. Another change which will prove gratifying is the removal of Edward Strauss's Orchestra from its position on the stage to a stand in the centre of the garden, where it is possible now to itself heard throughout the immense hall. Those who have seats in the orchestra must crane their necks in order to thoroughly appreciate the concert which is given by this famous band between the hours of 9 and 10 o'clock every night, though this would seem to be fair enough, for they are the spectators who are privileged to make the closest inspection of the 'novel idyllic ballets,' which begin and end the evening programme. . .

However, the disagreement was resolved by the spring of 1891 and the circus occupied the Garden. On the 14th of May in '90 the following list of officers for the garden was published in the *Times*:

TO MANAGE THE BIG GARDEN

The stockholders of the new Madison Square Garden yesterday re-elected the following gentlemen Directors: Hiram Hitchcock, J. Pierpont Morgan, Charles Lanier, Adolf Ladenburg, Darius O. Mills, Frank K. Sturgis, Hermann Oelrichs, Thomas W. Pearsall, William F. Wharton, Henry I. Nicholas, and Henry H. Hollister.

William A. Haines was re-elected Secretary, Thomas W. Pearsall Treasurer, and Samuel Franch & Son General Managers. The work on the Madison Square Garden structure is progressing satisfactorily, and is rapidly nearing completion.

Still another controversy arose in May,

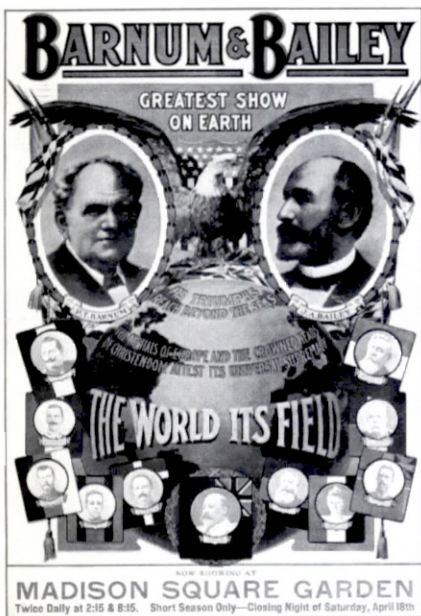
1890. The *Times* for May 23, 1890 (p. 5, col. 6) carried the following story:

THEATRE OWNERS PROTEST IS THE MADISON SQUARE GARDEN COMPANY DISOBEYING THE LAW?

Letters have been addressed to Mayor Grant, President Henry D. Purroy of the Board of Fire Commissioners, and Superintendent Brady of the Bureau of Buildings, protesting against the licensing by the former or the granting of a certificate by the latter to the Madison Square Garden Company for the use of the music hall for performances of stage scenery. The letters in question are signed by Ken-

After the Barnum show closed it's 1908 Garden stand on April 18, the Buffalo Bill Wild West show took over. This engraved invitation was issued to Vivan K. Cooke, daughter of Louis E. Cooke. Harold Dunn Collection.





The 1908 season of the Barnum show was advertised in this full color courier. Pfening Collection.

neson, Crain & Alling, lawyers, of the Mills Building.

The first of the series was sent to Mayor Grant last Monday, and called his attention to the published announcement that the Madison Square Garden Company proposes about the middle of June to give in a portion of its building 'public entertainments,' in which are to be employed 'stage scenery and apparatus and appliances thereto.' 'We have been requested,' the letter continues, 'to call your Honor's attention to the law of this State governing and regulating the erection and construction of buildings in the city of New York to be used for such purposes, and to submit that the proposed opening, as announced, for the purposes mentioned, would be a violation of the law.' In conclusion, a hearing is asked for before the granting of 'any theatrical or other license to the company.' The letters to President Purroy and Superintendent Brady are to the same effect.

Soon after the receipt of the letter addressed to him Mayor Grant sent for a member of the firm of Kenneson, Crain & Alling, and asked whom they represented in the matter. Yesterday he was presented with another letter, signed by a number of theatrical managers, declaring that they had employed the firm to act for them. Attached to the letter are the names of Oscar Hammerstein, Theodore Moss, Frank W. Sanger, Donald Frohman, A. M. Palmer, H. C. Miner, J. M. Hill, E. G. Gilmore, Henry Gilsey, J. Wesley Rosenquist, and Gustave Amberg.

A. A. Alling of the above-mentioned law firm, said last evening that the steps taken are to determine whether or not the same law applies to all theatrical

managers. 'The law governing the construction of theatres, as it now stands' he continued, 'requires that 'in every theatre, opera house or other building intended to be used for theatrical or operatic purposes, or for public entertainments of any kind where stage scenery and apparatus are required, a fire wall to be built of brick shall separate the auditorium from the stage, and the same shall extend at least four feet above the roof and shall be coped, a shaft or shafts shall be provided over the stage to and out of the roof, made of fire-proof material throughout, and of area or combined area of

By 1909 the Barnum show was fully under the ownership of the Ringling Bros. and they decided to switch opening cities and took the Greatest Show on Earth to Chicago to play the Coliseum. The Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows played its first and only date in Madison Square Garden in 1909. This newspaper ad appeared in the New York Herald, March 21, 1909. L. C. Dobbins Collection.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
SHORT SEASON ONLY—COMMENCING
THURSDAY MARCH 25
EVENING AT 8:15 O'CLOCK
Two Performances Daily Thereafter,
2:15 and 8:15 P. M.
(DOORS OPEN ONE HOUR EARLIER.)

First Time in New York City

RINGLING BROS.
WORLD'S GREATEST SHOWS

THE PHONE ELEPHANT
A BIG SHOW OF THIS SHOW
Capital: \$1,000,000
Double Length
Railroad Cars

THE ARTHUR SAXON TRIO
STRONGEST OF ALL
EARTH'S STRONG MEN
HOLDING 8000 LBS
ON THE FEET OF TWO MEN

NEW YORK NEVER SAW A SHOW LIKE THIS BEFORE
IN ALL THE WORLD THE GREATEST

THE HORSE CIRCUS
A BERT SCHEIDT
Admission to Everything,
REG. 50c
GUTH ST. & 27TH ST. ENTRANCES ONLY
RESERVED SEATS, 75c., \$1 & \$1.50
According to location, seating, etc. subject to change
ALL CHILDREN UNDER 12 AND ALL CHILDREN UNDER 10
WILL BE ADMITTED TO SEATING ONLY BY RESERVATION
Box Office Opens To-Morrow Morn. (Mon.), at 9



This very rare photo shows the outside of the Garden in the spring of 1909. A large lighted sign on the tower says Ringling Bros. Circus. Harold Dunn Collection.

one-eighth of said stage, fitted up with skylight, having sliding sash closed with double thick sheet glass, and so constructed as to open instantly on the cutting or burning of a hempen cord, and the proscenium opening shall be provided with a fire-proof metal curtain, or a curtain of asbestos or some fire-proof material.'

'None of these requirements has been compiled with in the part of the new building in which it is proposed to give the performance referred to, which they describe as ballet and spectacular performance, and which cannot be given without stage scenery. It is not the theatre part of the building which we object to that will not, as I understand it, be ready for use before next Fall. I understand that the company is now preparing a temporary or movable stage for use at the forthcoming performances, and we want to ascertain, since the owners of the Broadway, Union Square, and other theatres have been made to comply with the law, whether these gentlemen composing the Madison Square Garden Company will be required to conform to it also.'

And then one reads:

**A LICENSE WILL BE GRANTED
THE MAYOR DECIDES IN FAVOR
OF THE MADISON SQUARE
GARDEN COMPANY.**

The Madison Square Garden Company will get a license for the amphitheatre in the new building. May 20 Messrs. Kenneson, Crain, and Alling, acting for a number of theatrical managers, pro-

tested against the granting of a license to the amphitheatre, on the ground that the company proposed to give entertainments requiring stage scenery and apparatus, but that the portion of the building in question had not been constructed according to the requirements of the law governing the erection of buildings for such performances.

Yesterday afternoon Mayor Grant notified the persons interested that he would give the matter a hearing at once, and Messrs. Kennison and Alling appeared for the managers and James G. Janeway of Alexander & Green for the Madison Square Garden Company. Assistant Corporation Counsel Dean was on hand to advise the Mayor, and Fire Commissioner Robbins was present to look after the interests of his department.

Mr. Kennison said he had received less than an hour's notice of the hearing, and therefore was unprepared to go on. Mr. Janeway replied that as the protest was filed May 20 Mr. Kennison had had ample time to prepare for the hearing. Mayor Grant asked for the objections to the granting of the license, but Mr. Kennison declined to state them, but asked for an adjournment, which was denied. Mr. Kennison then said that he and his partner would withdraw from the case. Mayor Grant said he was not advised by Mr. Dean that he would have to grant the license. Mr. Janeway said the structure contained three separate and distinct buildings, the theatre proper, the concert saloon, and the amphitheatre. The company now asks for a license only for the amphitheatre. Superintendent Brady for the Bureau of Buildings said the amphitheatre was constructed in accordance with the building laws. The other two buildings were not sufficiently advanced to enable him to give an opinion as to them. Commissioner Robbins endorsed Superintendent Brady's statement.

Mayor Grant then said he would grant the license, and the announcement would enable the objecting managers to appeal to the courts for an injunction or such other relief as they see fit to ask for. In order to give all parties ample time he would not sign the license until 4 P.M. today. Mr. Janeway said that he hoped his opponents would not delay any legal steps they propose to take, as the company wishes to open the amphitheatre June 13. By advice of Mr. Dean the license will be issued under Section 1,998 of the Consolidation act and permits all kinds of amusement and entertainment enumerated in this section, except theatrical and operatic performances in which stage scenery and appliances are employed.

Other legal restraining steps were also taken but denied as learned in the *Times* (June 3, 1890 (p. 8, col. 2)):

The effort of theatrical managers to find a legal obstacle to the issuance of a license to the Madison Square Garden enterprise has failed as far as the steps



The first season of the Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill Wild West was 1909, opening in Madison Square Garden following the Ringling stand. This photo shows the two Bills passing in the arena during a Garden performance in 1909. Harold Dunn Collection.

already taken are concerned. The injunction obtained last week by James J. Cowdry, 'taxpayer,' representing the managers, from Judge Lawrence of the Superior Court, was returnable yesterday in Chambers. It was dismissed when Judge Ingraham was informed that Mayor Grant had already granted the license.

One final item in these circumstances involves the charge that:

Manager T. Henry French charges that jealousy prompted the efforts of other New York managers to prevent the Mayor from issuing a license for the opening of the Madison Square Amphitheatre, and he goes further than this and hints that something like fraud was perpetrated in the matter. Among the name of managers affixed to the petition asking Mayor Grant to refuse a license was that of G. Amberg. Mr. Amberg has written a letter to Mr. French, in which he says: 'Prompted by the desire of not being misrepresented I beg to inform you that from the very beginning I refused to sign any such petition, and I have never done so.' It would seem to be in order now for the managers who did sign the petition to explain how Mr. Amberg's name came to be used without authority. This was the last of the matter as far as the newspaper reporting is concerned until June 17, 1890 when the *Times* carried an exten-

sive article on the opening of Madison Square Garden.

The *Times* for May 13, 1891 carried the following report on the annual meeting of the Madison Square Garden Company:

DIRECTORS OF THE GARDEN COMPANY

The annual meeting of the stockholders of Madison Square Garden Corporation was held yesterday afternoon and the following Directors were elected: Hiram Hitchcock, Adolph Ladenberg, J. Pierpont Morgan, Charles Lanier, Darius O. Mills, Frank M. Sturgis, Herman Oelrichs, Henry H. Hollister, John Sloan, Stanford White, and David H. King, Jr. The three last named take the places of Thomas W. Pearsall, William J. Wharton, and Harry I. Nicholas.

President Hitchcock said that the meeting was perfectly harmonious notwithstanding a new management had been chosen. The outlook for the future of the company was most encouraging. There was no deficit, the floating debt had been wholly wiped out, and the company was on a flourishing financial footing.

FOOTNOTES

²⁷ *White Tops*, May-June, 1934, p. 8

²⁸ Barnum, p. 691

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 688

³⁰ *White Tops*, July-August, 1948, p. 9

³¹ *New York Times*, September 2, 1881

³² *Ibid.*, September 4, 1881, p. 7

³³ *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, March, 1894, p. 738

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 739

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 739

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 745

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Harper's Weekly*, June 28, 1890, p. 495

³⁹ *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, March, 1894, p. 746

⁴⁰ *Critic*, January 21, 1890 (n. s. 13), pp. 310-311

AL G. BARNES CIRCUS LITHOGRAPHS

While in Florida in April the Editor was privileged to again view portions of the magnificent circus collection of Harold Dunn. Without question Mr. Dunn has by far the largest private collection of lithographs in the world.

In the past various circus lithos from the Dunn Collection have been reproduced in the **BANDWAGON**. Most of the lithos in this display are from the Dunn Collection and were photographed this spring.

The Al G. Barnes Wild Animal Circus

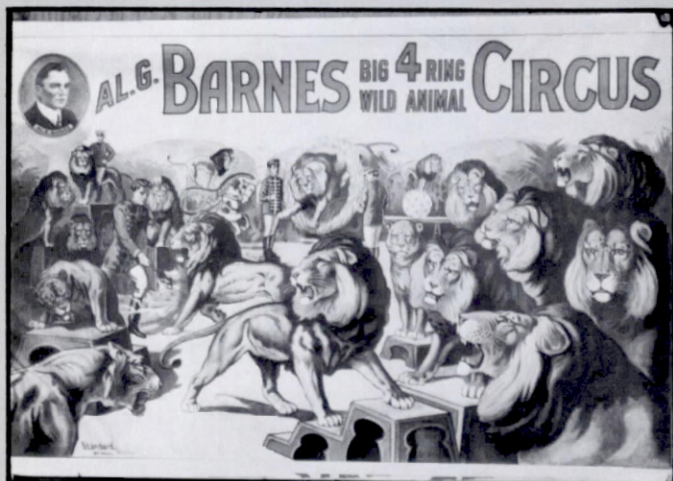
toured from 1909 until 1928 under the ownership of Mr. Barnes. It was purchased in 1929 by the American Circus Corporation and in turn by John Ringling a year later, continuing under the Ringling-Barnum ownership until the end of the 1938 season.


During the span of 29 years the Barnes show used lithograph paper from a number of printing firms. The seal act bill shown here was printed by the National Printing Co., of Chicago, Illinois. The leopard act with woman trainer, the lion

act with Barnes photo and the lion act with a woman trainer with Barnes photo posters were all printed by the Standard Litho Co., of St. Paul, Minn. These were used prior to 1929.

The remaining bills were designed and printed by the Erie Litho Co., of Erie, Pa. and were mostly used after the show was sold to the Corporation and in turn the Ringling interests.

Most of the lithos are from the Dunn Collection. The rest are from the Kent Ghirard Collection, of Honolulu, Hawaii.





WAIT
FOR THE
BIG CIRCUS
THE SHOW YOU KNOW
AL.G. BARNES
WILD ANIMAL
CIRCUS

AL.G. BARNES **QUALITY CIRCUS**
OF THE WORLD
"The Show that's Different"



BEAUTIFUL BIRDS EVERY CLIME A MAMMOTH DISPLAY OF BIRD SPECIMENS IN THIS YEAR'S ALL NEW CIRCUS

AL.G. BARNES **QUALITY CIRCUS**
OF THE WORLD
"The Show that's Different"



STANDARD ARTISTS' RIGHTS IN THE HIGHEST CIRCUS OF ALL TIMES

AL.G. BARNES **FOUR RING CIRCUS**
"The Show that's Different"




THE ONLY WAY TO SEE BIRDS, BEASTS, WILDING HORSES, AND THE ALL NEW PRODUCTIONS OF "THE AL.G. BARNES'S KING CIRCUS."

AL.G. BARNES **QUALITY CIRCUS**
OF THE WORLD
"The Show that's Different"



UP TO THE MINUTE CLOWNS PROVIDE NEW STUNTS, LAUGHS AND THRILLS

AL.G. BARNES **SUPERB SPECTACLE**
ALADDIN AND THE PARADE OF GOLD



AL.G. BARNES **QUALITY CIRCUS**
OF THE WORLD



KLINKERTS EQUESTRIAN MIDGETS (A TINY HORSEMAN & WOMEN FROM BAVARIA) ANOTHER OF AL.G. BARNES IMPORTED FEATURES

REALITY! SUPERB SPECTACLE! LA MIEUX!

A Thousand Footnotes to History

CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM PRESENTS THE PAPERS OF WILLIAM P. HALL

By Tom Parkinson For
The Circus World Museum

PART THREE

The William P. Hall Papers Pertaining To CARL HAGENBECK

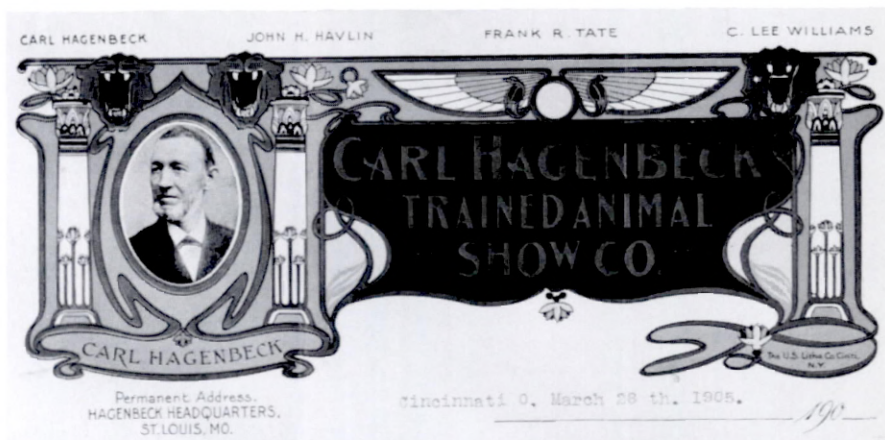
William P. Hall's dealings with the Hagenbeck title ranged from the Hagenbeck Trained Animal Show at the St. Louis Fair, to the Carl Hagenbeck railroad show that followed and to the Carl Hagenbeck animal business in Germany.

C. Lee Williams, one of the American partners in Hagenbeck shows, wrote most of the letters. On November 7, 1904, he told about plans to accept Hall's invitation to visit Lancaster. This could have marked their first correspondence, although they must have met at the St. Louis fair that season. Hall probably hoped to sell them some horses. (CLW-WPH 11-7-04) But by then Hall was well along toward buying the Main show as his first circus venture.

Williams saw the ex-Main show while Hall still had it at Geneva quarters and wrote Hall that it looked good and that he hoped Hall would "get a lot of velvet" with it. William's main purpose in writing was to say the Hagenbeck show would need 24 more baggage horses than they had ordered (presumably on that visit to Lancaster) because they were enlarging the show. He also reported to Hall that they had no elephants for sale but could get some from Hagenbeck in Germany. This report ties in with Hall's other correspondence at the time trying to find elephants for his own show. (CLW-WPH 2-18-05)

A month later Hall was arranging to see the Hagenbeck show's surplus animals. Williams sent Hall a \$1,000 payment on horses and wrote of the wild animals Hall would see. "Now W. P. . . they are all fine stock and . . . will put life and action on the wheels, which is what is needed with some of that stuff of yours." (CLW-WPH 3-16-05) On that trip to Ohio, Hall got a tiger, Yak and python for his own show; Williams wrote to offer more, including zebrulas. (CLW-WPH 3-20-05)

A week later, Lorenz Hagenbeck, partner in the American show and son of the dealer, offered Hall four elephants. This could be the four that were delivered to Hall in New



The letterhead of the 1905 Carl Hagenbeck Trained Animal Show Co. is beautifully printed. The title is in gold outlined in black on a red background. The rest of the design is in yellow and gold. All letterheads from Circus World Museum.

York according to correspondence with his

own agent, W. R. Musgat on the Hall show.

Lorenz Hagenbeck offered two elephants either for \$3200 or for 20 Missouri mules. One imagines that this sort of horse trading

This litho used by the Hagenbeck show was designed and printed by the Russell Morgan show print. Pfening Collection.



appealed to the Horse King of the World and that he got his elephants by this avenue, but the letters don't confirm it. (LH-WPH 3-28-05)

After the Carl Hagenbeck Wild Animal Show completed its first road tour, it went into quarters at Carthage, Ohio. Williams wrote to Hall that they had decided to enlarge the show and therefore would need, not 80, but 100 horses "as we got from you last year". They also would want 50 lighter horses for parade and entry use, not work. Williams would order 100 baggage horses, or "from 200 to 225 in all," although the arithmetic doesn't follow. They would pay \$100 per head for the season, with the privilege of purchasing them if the show desired. (CLW-WPH 10-10 or 11-10-05)

On New Year's Eve, 1905, Williams wrote from his home in Cincinnati that his show would want 93 baggage horses, 27 cheap riding horses, 4 chariot horses and 12 ponies. This letter was addressed to Scotty, who was Hall's assistant at Lancaster. Several showmen dealt with Scotty and ask him to select their horses. (CLW-WPH 12-31-05)

Terms were agreed upon. On January 25, Williams wrote to confirm a wire saying "ship the cars to the Venice Transportation Co. when ready." He also asked whether Hall had two big baggage wagons he could sell to Hagenbeck. (1-25-06) On the next day, Williams mailed to Hall a contract and lease covering the use of 93 baggage horses.

These documents call to mind the separate understanding of show historians that the Carl Hagenbeck draft stock came from the Walter L. Main show. It has been understood that Hall did not buy those horses, having his own stock of course, and

The Talbot paper has the title in blue outlined in red on a full color illustration of the fire.



Photos of the Talbot show are very rare. This photo of the advance advertising car is from the Pfening Collection.

that Main leased them to the Hagenbeck show. Now there are letters to prove that Hagenbeck got baggage stock — nearly 100 head — from Hall. It may be that the show got both sets of horses to make up what it needed, but this is yet to be clarified.

The William P. Hall Papers Pertaining To TALBOT'S "FIGHTING THE FLAMES"

William's next correspondence brings Talbot's Fighting the Flames show into the picture. Frank Tate was a partner in the Hagenbeck show. John Talbot was a circus fixer. Talbot and Tate put out the separate

fire show to cash in on the current popularity of such outfits. Williams wrote to Hall that he understood Tate was to have been in Lancaster by then to see about a train and wagons. He asked again if Hall had two big baggage wagons for the Hagenbeck show, and he reminded Hall to let him know about the cars going to the Venice company, presumable with the 93 head of horses. (CLW-WPH 1-29-06)

The Hall Papers include one sheet of a longer letter from Talbot's Fighting the Flames. Only the first page is present; there is no signature but it presumably came from Tate or Talbot. It states a need for a second team of blacks for use in quarters and asks Hall to send such a team with "the carload of horses that you are shipping this way." Their quarters were in St. Louis and the letter was from there. Whether it refers to a carload of horses for Talbot or to horses being shipped to nearby Venice, Illinois, for the Hagenbeck show is not clear, but odds are that it means horses for the first show.

The writer of that fire show letter says, "Our Mr. Riddle will write Scotty and tell him just what kind of team he wants." Then it adds:

"We received the wagons all in good shape and have started to paint them . . ." (Talbot's Fire Show to WPH 2-8-06)

This refers, no doubt, to the stuff that Tate had bought from Hall for the fire show. It meshes with the Billboard report of Tate and Talbot buying a bandwagon, 12 cars and 40 horses from Hall for the Flames show, reported in the issue of February 3, 1906. Later when the Flames show folded, it offered for sale about a dozen show wagons, including a bandwagon, callopie and ten baggage wagons, as well as fire equipment. This letter to Hall, referring to "wagons", confirms they got more wagons from him than just the bandwagon reported by The Billboard. (Talbot's to WPH 2-8-06)

That winter's correspondence was completed by a letter acknowledging that Hall had said "all the stuff" would go on five cars. It mentioned the Arms Company, which operated Arms Palace Cars for horses, and we assume this covered the



it blew both performances, there was no rent due on the elephants. This probably was written for the 1913 deal but could have applied later too.

And Hall seems to have accepted Cory's offer of \$125 weekly for a five-act. There are several letters of transmittal in 1914, paying at that rate. In 1915 Hagenbeck-Wallace bought some Hall elephants. Cory sent \$2,000 to cover "ten of those notes" one time. (CEC-WPH 5-20-15) and a month later sent the unspecified balance. (CEC-WPH 6-17-15)

The William P. Hall Papers Pertaining To The ROBINSON FAMOUS SHOWS

Little Danny Robinson's circus is one of those shows about which very little is known; it comes up in circus history primarily because Jerry Mugivan later bought the title. Now the William P. Hall Papers serve to cast a little more light on the story of this show.

Involved are three principal people — Danny Robinson, whose name was on the wagons; John A. Barton, one of those perennials around the small rail shows of the early 1900's; and the notorious Bunk Allen.

If Bunk Allen's name was publicly associated with the show at the time it was tramping in 1910 and 1911, that fact was not noted by me in reading the Billboard 40 years later. Gordon Yaden, Delavan, Wisconsin, uncovered and wrote the lurid biography of Allen and that is one of few other mentions of him that I recall.

So it is noteworthy that the Hall Papers link Allen with the Robinson show. Allen was a grifter, strongarm artist, fence, gambler and general nefarious type.

The first letter in the Papers came from Danny Robinson in 1906, when he operated a carnival, Famous Robinson Amusements, and he asked Hall for a list of show property for sale. (1-30-06) DRR-WPH)

Four years later when Robinson turned to the circus business Hall apparently tried to interest him in some horses. On a letterhead of the Robinson's Famous Shows, Robinson wrote that he was buying his horses from Indiana dealers (and therefore didn't need Hall's). But he wanted to know "what have you in the line of calliopes, bandwagons, tableau?" (DRR-WPH 2-24-10)

It was more than a year before the next letter, and by then Hall had prevailed; Robinson Famous Shows had bought horses from Hall.

Barton, a repeated associate of Hall's, wrote from the Robinson winter quarters at Nashville that they were watching for the horses to come in. Then he asked Hall to wrap some old canvas around a lot of



The 1910 letterhead of the Robinson's Famous Shows is printed in blue with photo of Danny Robinson in brown. The current letterhead of BANDWAGON magazine uses this design.

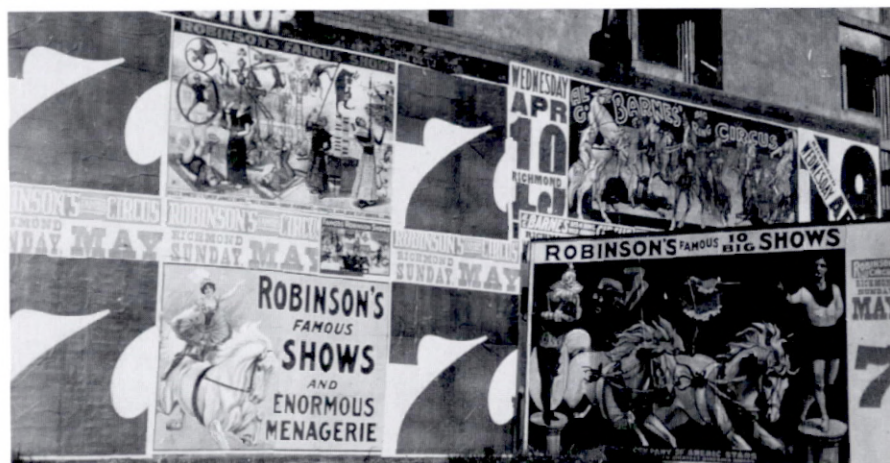
mattresses he had seen at the Hall farm and ship them to the show for the coaches. (JAB-WPH 3-29-11) The mattresses probably came to Hall from Young Buffalo Wild West.

"My God!" Barton wrote, "Why did you send those mattresses by express? I wanted them sent by freight. The \$21 express charge" he said, "was more than the mattresses were worth." (JAB-WPH 4-8-11)

On the same day, Robinson wrote that he was shipping a camel to Hall, as agreed. He wanted to buy a set of four-horse harness. He complained that among the horses, which had arrived, one or two were running at the nose, but this seemed minor so far. It proved to be the camel that caused more correspondence. (DRR-WPH 4-8-11)

Robinson wrote later that he had tried to get the horse rate for the camel "and it left here that way and no one knew what was in the car. Hope you have no trouble

Although this bill stand was used in 1916 while the show was under Mugivan and Bowers ownership it uses some of the special paper designed for the Danny Robinson original show. Opposition paper for the Al G. Barnes show is in the background. Pfening Collection.



at that end." (DRR-WPH 4-10-11) But trouble there was; Robinson heard about it from Hall and had to explain further:

"It was shipped as a beast of burden, not a camel. The U.S. government have to decide and that they must be held in quarantine for 30 days. I cannot conceive why I should be blamed in this transaction at all, as I used extra precaution because the animal was going to Des Moines . . . If they sell the animal for freight, somebody can buy it in." (DRR-WPH 4-16-11)

The camel freight problem seemed small compared to the next item of business. The partial correspondence reveals that Robinson and his partner, Bunk Allen, could not get along together. Barton's letter is the first of a pair:

"Mr. Allen says Mr. Little (George Little, an associate of Allen's) lost his mind and tried to kill a couple of police and got shot himself and is in bad shape."

It was Barton's opinion that Bunk Allen would sell the show to Hall. "He can't get along with Robinson," Barton wrote in urging Hall to come to buy the show. He would arrange for Hall to meet Allen in a hotel away from the show and no one would know. Barton also reported that Robinson had gone off to see someone he thought would buy the show. Barton was excited about the intrigue and the opportunity to own a show. "For God's sake, Hall, come on!" he wrote. (JAB-WPH 6-26-11)

Then Robinson himself wrote to Hall about the other side of the troubles. He

Readers Comments

"The Parallel Development of Circuses and Bands in America," November-December, 1972.

I have enjoyed reading the series of articles by Sverre and Faye Braathen that have appeared in the last several issues of *Bandwagon*. They have provided interesting information on several aspects of the circus.

In their most recent piece, *The Parallel Development of Circuses and Bands in America*, in the November, 1972 issue there are several statements that fall within the limits of my own specialty in circus history and I would like to comment upon them.

As with most of us, the Braathens can be tripped up by prior research. On page 6, column 1 they repeat a statistic first written down by R. W. G. Vail in his *Random Notes on the History of the Early American Circus*, (Worcester, 1934) in which he states that there were an estimated thirty circuses on the road in the 1820's. I have never been able to understand where Mr. Vail found such a figure. In 1820 there were two circuses on the road and in 1829 there were ten at most. If one includes menageries he could increase this figure by two to four per year. By a stretch of the research to date, ignoring the fact that one troupe might carry three names in a single season, I can list fifteen names for 1826.

On page 7, column 3 the article states, "Somersaults from the ground made their appearance in Boston in 1880..." If by this is meant the first attempt at such a turn I refer readers to the Charleston (S.C.) City Gazette of September 9 through 23, 1800 in which Francis Ricketts advertised such as his specialty with Langley & Company.

Also on page 7, column 3 there appears the note that, "This same year (1881) witnessed the first time a performer walked a long cable pitched at a steep angle to a platform above." This was a common act in the days before tenting, the wire usually being strung from the gallery to the stage. James Hunter performed this feat often in the 1820's. A fine example of his ability is his act in the C Street Circus in Washington in 1828 in which his wire was 250 feet long, a prodigious distance in that era.

All of these notes are minor to the Braathens work, their purpose being the history of circus music. I offer my comments in the interest of historical accuracy as I would not like to see the statements I have noted accepted as fact by future writers. — STUART THAYER

They Made It Click Jan. Feb. 1973

In reading the fine article in the last issue of the *BANDWAGON* regarding the bosses

of the Ringling Barnum Circus I noted Mr. Braathen's comment about Fred and Ella Bradna never being seen in the cook house.

I have a 16mm movie of the Ringling Barnum cook house showing Fred Bradna sitting along side Lillian Leitzel.

While on the show I can recall very faintly seeing Bradna going to the cook-house a few times, but I don't recall ever seeing Ella going there. — George E. Baney

"The Orchestmelochor Wagon and Its Origins," November-December, 1972.



I happened to be in the vicinity of Emerson's Animal Farm at Newington, Connecticut, about eight miles south of Hartford, last week, and I took time out to take the above picture of the old Ringling-Barnum Cage which has the original statues off the Orchestmelochor wagon on its corners. One of the statues, as noted in your article, was stolen several years ago when the wagon was taken to New York to be used as background for a TV show with a circus theme. Emerson's Animal Farm is in the path of a new highway construction project, so what the fate of the old wagon is after this year is questionable. — Wes Herwig

Scholarly Journal Features Circus

The Winter 1972, issue of the *Journal of Popular Culture*, edited by Ray B. Browne and published by the Popular Culture Association, featured a special section on circuses, carnivals, and fairs in America edited by CHS member Marcello Truzzi. It includes essays on such diverse topics as the 1893 Columbian Exposition, carnival social systems, and carnival gift. Of particular interest to circus historians are "Some Perspectives on the Circus in Transition," by Robert C. Sweet and Robert W. Habenstein; "Gaff Joints and Shell Games: A Century of Circus Grift," by James A. Inciardi and David M. Peterson; "Myths vs. Rites: A Study of Wild Animal Displays in Circuses and Zoos," by Paul A. Bouissac; and "A Selected Guide to Source Material on the American Circus," by Richard W. Flint, a *Bandwagon* contributor. These authors have drawn from sources generally unavailable or unknown to most *Bandwagon* readers, and exemplify the suggestive new paths in circus historiography that many academics are following. It is an important milestone in historical writing on the outdoor amusement industry; one that should be part of the reference library of any serious student of the history of the circus. Copies may be obtained for \$3.00 by writing the Journal of Popular Culture, Bowling Green University, University Hall 100, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403. — Fred D. Pfening, III.

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